Fynes' History of Northumberland and Durham Miners.

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The Miners

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Northumberland and Durham.

A HISTORY OF THEIR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS.

By RICHARD FYNES, Blyth.

Published 1873.

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FOREWORD.

AT last the thing that many have hoped and worked for is come to pass. Richard Fynes' History of the Northumberland and Durham Miners has been re-published, thanks to the sympathy, enterprise, and energy of the young Printer, Mr. Thomas Summerbell, Junr., son of that worthy stalwart, the late Mr. Thomas Summerbell, Labour M.P. for Sunderland, who at all times and under all sorts of conditions stood out as a staunch friend of the Miners ; it is now afforded to the present day Miners, and public in general, an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the earlier history of the Northern Miner as told by Richard Fynes. It is a true record of those days and should be welcomed as a text book for students of all classes, and particularly for those interested in Industrial History.

This is a wonderful story, revealing the hard and tragic life of the Miner and his family during the early part of the nineteenth century. It is published just at a time when the men who are the connecting link between that day and this are fast passing away, and therefore it comes at an opportune moment when there is a very grave danger of the Northern Miner, expecially the younger generation, forgetting the past history of our industry, and with it our indebtedness to those noble pioneers who so faithfully, and at great personal sacrifice and privation, fought and toiled so that the greater liberty we now enjoy might be won.

It is sometimes flippantly said that things are not getting better, that we are worse off than ever we were. Let the person who thinks that read this book. Let him contrast those days with these—those days when wee laddies, 7, 8, 9 and 10 years of age were taken out of their beds in the early morning and oftimes carried half asleep on father's back to descend the mine for a period of 12 to 14 hours per day, only seeing the daylight at the week end—these days with an age limit of 14 years and hours less than $7\frac{1}{2}$ bank to bank, with better working conditions and other advantages than had the boys of 40, 50 and 60 years ago.

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It reveals the low wages and tyrannical conditions under which the Miner worked. It unfolds a story of victimisation that well might have broken the heart of the stoutest men. It describes the operation of the yearly bond, and that ancient and corrupt institution known as the " Tommy Shop," where the Miner's wife was further exploited by the same people who were crushing the life and soul out of her husband by the hard conditions under which he was compelled to work. It gives evidence that when the Miners asked for greater safety, two shafts to every colliery, additional Mines' Inspectors, and other reforms, they were always met with the cry that it would ruin the industry. We still hear that cry in these days, a cry as untrue now as then. It gives tragic pictures of men, women and children being evicted from their homes and left to shelter as best they might behind the hedge and in the field because they had dared to ask for their rights or sought to organise their fellows. It does all this, but its greatest picture is the depicting of men like Thomas Hepburn, Tommy Ramsay, Martin Jude, and hosts of other heroes who faced all the hard conditions, privations and tyranny and resolutely voiced the wrongs of their fellows, demanding reforms and the right to organise. They were persecuted by their employers, deserted at times by their fellows, yet they stood true to their principles, sowing the seed that was to give us greater freedom, paying the price that gives us a higher standard of life.

It is acknowledged that the Miners are probably the best organised workers, both politically and industrially, in the world. It is the fruit of their labours.

They were the type of men of whom Browning wrote :—

> One who never turned his back but marched breast forward ;
> Never doubted clouds would break ; never dreamed though right were worsted
> Wrong would triumph ;
> Held we fall to rise—are baffled to fight better—
> Sleep to wake.

W. P. RICHARDSON.

Red Hill, Durham,
July, 1923.

RICHARD FYNES.

PREFACE.

WHILE it is unnecessary to offer any apology for appearing before the public in the capacity of author, as my friends are now in the habit of looking for me in varied and strange characters, a word or two of explanation as to why I have undertaken this work may perhaps be regarded as necessary. Coal, which has moved nations, and enabled capitalists to amass princely fortunes, has recently formed the subject of much speculation and debate ; and the miners, who endanger their lives to produce this useful commodity, have now come to be regarded as objects of universal interest. The character of the miners—individual and general—has been discussed in public and private assemblies, and columns of flowery nonsense have been printed in newspapers about them. Many writers have endeavoured—some of them in a supercilious and patronising fashion—to give the public a notion of the peculiar traits and habits of the miners, and whilst many of them have been successful in this respect, none of them have yet, to my knowledge, attempted to give any account of their doings. their sufferings, and their struggles, in the assertion of their social and political independence.

With the view of supplying this deficiency, I have set myself to work, feeling in some measure qualified for the task in consequence of having spent all, except the last few years, of my life in the pits. I have passed through all the grades of mining work, from being a trapper boy behind a door to a hewer at the face, and have therefore had many opportunities of witnessing the dangers, the hardships, and the drudgery of a miner's life ; whilst I have also seen, or heard, or read of the glorious deeds done by men who are now well nigh forgotten

Though the passing events of the present day are of more importance to living Englishmen, as having more

influence on their happiness, than events which occurred in periods now long passed away, yet authentic information concerning the lives of our predecessors is not only interesting but necessary, in order that we may profit by their experience, follow the good example they have set us, and eschew the errors by which they fell. My sole aim in undertaking the compilation of a history of the miners of Northumberland and Durham has been to furnish correct information concerning this useful body of men, and to what extent I have succeeded I will leave the public to judge. For myself I may say I have spared neither time nor trouble in collecting the materials necessary for such an undertaking, and whilst I have searched records of every description I have been careful to use nothing but what has been proved to be strictly accurate when put to the test. In order to avoid giving my book the least tinge of fiction, my wish, above every other thing, has been throughout to supply accurate data which may be quoted with confidence by my readers, and generally to produce an unvarnished history of the miners of those two large coal-producing counties of Northumberland and Durham, together with brief notices of those great reformers, the result of whose intelligent, zealous, and patriotic labours the miners of the present day are enjoying. I have likewise been desirous of steering clear of all exaggeration in relating some of the stirring events which are recorded, and wherever such has been possible, I have made the actors in those scenes tell their own tales by quoting largely from the speeches made by them at the various meetings held in the district. As a faithful historian I have felt it to be my duty to introduce unpleasant matters, which have occupied attention from time to time, but in doing this I have had no wish to stir up latent animosities.

Though I have done my best in all these respects, I am yet conscious of many shortcomings, and for these I claim the indulgence of my readers.

RICHARD FYNES.

Blyth, November, 1873.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

It should be remembered that this book was written in 1873, and that when referring to the present it means 50 years ago.

THE MINERS

OF

NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM, &c.

CHAPTER I.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE NEWCASTLE COAL TRADE.

As any history of such a large and important community as that of the miners of the North would be incomplete without some reference to the rise and progress of the trade by which so many thousands earn their livelihood, and which conduces so much to the comfort of the whole of the nation, a few particulars of the rise and progress of the Newcastle coal trade—the nucleus around which the coal trade of the North of England was formed—may not be considered out of place here.

Though the presence of coal beneath the surface of the earth was no secret, and though there is much positive evidence that the Romans were acquainted with the use of coal as fuel, many centuries passed away before coal-getting became anything like a trade, or its use anything to speak of. It is true that in many districts where coal was easily obtained, it was used by smiths in their forges, but by far the greater number of our forefathers preferred to use charcoal for domestic purposes ; and indeed so strong was the prejudice against its use, that, according to Stowe, the nice dames of London, in the early part of the sixteenth century, " would not come into any house or room where sea-coales are burned ; nor willingly eat of meat that was either sod or roasted with sea-coal fire." But, though the prejudice against coal continued till the sixteenth century, there is proof that as early as the thirteenth coals were used in sufficient quantities as to become the subject of a special charter

from King Henry the Third, in the year 1239, who granted "to the good men of Newcastle licence to dig coals in the common soil of the town, without the walls thereof, in the place called Castle Field and the Forth, and from thence to draw and convert them to their own profit in aid of their fee-farm rent of £100 per annum." The same king subsequently gave them all the stone and coals in the Forth adjoining to the former; and the revenues of the town increased so much by the sale of coals that in 1280, we are told it was worth £200 a year. They were also very extensively used in London about this time, so much so, that Parliament complained in 1306 to the King that they "infected the air in noxious vapours." The sensitive gentlemen of the present day, who cannot endure a little coal smoke are therefore not the originators of this crusade against the use of coals, for nearly six centuries ago our legislators procured the publication of two proclamations prohibiting their further use, and containing strict orders to inflict fines upon all delinquents, and to destroy all furnaces and kilns in which coals were used. But necessity and experience soon triumphed over ignorance and selfishness; and a debt of 10s. was incurred for coal at the coronation of Edward the Third, proving that it must have been used in that ceremony notwithstanding the proclamations.

Edward the Third granted licences to Newcastle to work coal in the Castle Field and Castle Moor, issued orders concerning coal measures, suffered coals won in the fields of Gateshead to be taken across the Tyne in boats to Newcastle on condition of their paying the usual customs of the port; and after that to be sent to any part of the kingdom, either by land or sea, but to no place out of it except Calais. In the year 1330 the Priory of Tynemouth let a colliery called Heygrove, at "Elstewyke," for £5, another in the East field there at 6 marks a year; besides which they had one in the West field, and another near Gallow Flat on the same estate in the years 1331 and 1334. Then as an evidence of the progress which had taken place, in the trade, it may be mentioned that these mines were let in the year 1530, for £20 a year, a condition of the lease being that not more than twenty chaldrons, of six bolls each, should be drawn in a day. In 1538, two pits were let by the same priory for

the yearly rent of £50, and in 1554 Queen Mary granted a lease of 21 years on all mines " within the fields and bounds of Elstwick," at the annual rent of £68. Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1582, obtained a 99 years' lease of the manors and royalties of Gateshead and Whickham at the yearly rental of £90. This, which was called " the Grand Lease," caused an immediate advance in coals ; but the Queen soon transferred it to the Earl of Leicester, who in his turn assigned it to his secretary, Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charter House. Sutton transferred this lease to Sir William Riddell and others for the use of the Mayor and Burgesses of Newcastle in consideration of £12,000 The " Grand Lease " put the coal trade into a terrible fever, and the price of coals in London, while Sutton held it, was 6s. a chaldron ; but, on its assignment to the Corporation of Newcastle, they rose to 7s. ; and soon after to 8s. In the year 1590 the market price was advanced to 9s., upon which the Lord Mayor complained to Lord Treasurer Burleigh against the town of Newcastle, setting forth that the society of Free Hosts, consisting of about 60 persons, had consigned their right of " the Grand Lease " to about 18 or 20 persons, who engrossed the collieries at Stella, Ravensworth, Newburn, &c., and requesting that the whole might be opened and the price fixed at a maximum of 7s. per chaldron.

In the year 1602 there were 28 acting fitters or hostmen, who were to vend yearly 9,080 tons of coals and provide 85 keels for that purpose. In 1615 the trade appears to have employed 400 sail of ships, one half of which supplied London, and the other half the rest of England. The French also traded somewhat extensively with Newcastle at this time, and coal for Picardy, Normandy, Bretagne and other ports was exported from the Tyne, often in fleets of 50 sail at one time. In the year 1616 the quantity of coals shipped from the port was 13,675 tons, and in 1622 the vend had increased to 14,420 tons. So, the coal trade, which then began to increase with great rapidity from year to year, went on progressing till the year 1640, when Newcastle was in the hands of the Covenanters, and in a state of siege. Trade of all kinds was at a stand still, the coal trade especially sustaining a very heavy loss ; and from employ-

ing 10,000 men, as it had done just before, not a tenth of that number could be found hardy enough to remain at their work. Every one fled, thinking the Scots would give them no quarter, and more than 100 vessels arriving off Tynemouth Bar the day after the fight, and hearing of the possession of Newcastle by the Scots, returned to the Thames empty. But with the quittance of the Scots the mischief was not ended, for in the January of 1642 an ordinance of parliament prohibited ships from carrying coals or salt from "Newcastle, Sunderland, or Blithe," and succeeding restrictions and impositions all conspired to make coals so dear in London that the price at which they were sold at that period was no less than £4 per chaldron. Such a state of things could no more prevail for any length of time at this early period than in our own time, and accordingly we find amongst the ordinances of parliament, 12th May, 1643, that it "was ordained that there be a free and open trade in the ports of Sunderland in the County of Durham, and Blithe in the County of Northumberland, to relieve the poor inhabitants thereabout by reasons of rapines and spoyls those enemies of Newcastle have brought upon them in those two Counties, they all being in great want and extremety." The high prices of coal at present prevailing recalls the proposition of the author of a work called "The Grand Concern of England," printed in the year 1673, who amongst other schemes for bettering the people of this Country suggested that the coal trade should in future be managed by Commissioners empowered to supply all ports of the nation with coals at an uniform rate. "I need not," writes this speculator, "declare how the subjects are abused in the price of coals; how many poor have been starved for want of fewel by reason of the horrid prices put upon them, especially in time of war, either by the Merchants, or the Woodmonger, or between them both." The price he reckons at that time to be about 7s., a Newcastle chaldron, the freight 6s. City duty 3s., and lighterage, wharfage and cartage 4s. "If then," he adds, "three Newcastle chaldrons, computed at £3 make 5 London chaldron and they be sold at £5 10s., there is very nigh half in half got thereby: Considering then how many hundred thousand chaldrons of coals are spent every year, by a moderate computation it

will appear that near £200,000 per annum advantage may arise hereby to the public, and the subject also receive a great benefit by the same."

After the re-opening of the coal trade ports and the removal of the silly restriction, this flourishing trade began to assume considerable dimensions, and in 1655 about 320 coal keels appear to have been employed on the River Tyne. In 1676 it is estimated that the aggregate tonnage of the coal shipping of Newcastle amounted to 80,000 tons ; and in 1699, according to Brand, 14,000 ships were engaged in this trade altogether, carrying annually to London 300,000 Newcastle chaldrons of coal, of which about two-thirds went from Newcastle. In 1703 the masters of the Newcastle Trinity House in answer to the question from the House of Commons, asserted that 600 ships, one with another, each of 80 Newcastle chaldrons, with 4,500 men, were requisite for carrying on the trade. From 1704 to 1710, the average annual export of coal from Newcastle was 178,143 chaldrons, whilst from Sunderland the average annual export for the same period was 65,760 chaldrons. In 1764 the coasting coal trade of the Tyne had increased by 20,000 chaldrons, and by 40,000 into foreign parts ; 3,727 vessels clearing from the Tyne with coals during the year for the coast, and 365 for foreign ports. The average annual clearance of coal for six years ending at Christmas time 1776, was 260,000 chaldrons to London, 90,000 to other British ports, 2,000 to British Colonies and 27,000 to other Foreign ports ; in all 380,000 Newcastle chaldrons.

The demand continued to grow, and with the demand the resources for supplying it. New Collieries were opened out in all directions, new methods of raising coals were introduced, wooden rails were laid down, and waggons, to carry each a chaldron, were brought into use. Previous to the introduction of the waggons and waggon-ways the whole of the coals used to be transported either in keels or in carts, for at a Court of the Hostmen's Company held in Newcastle in 1600, wains were ordered to be all measured and marked, as it appeared that " from time out of mynd it hath been accustomed that all cole waynes did usuallie cary and bring eighte bouls of coles to all the staithes upon the Ryver Tine, but of late years severall hath brought only or scarce

seven bolles." The same record mentions "two small maunds or pannyers holding two or three pecks a-piece," from which it appears evident that coals were not only carried in carts but that a practice of carrying them on horse-back prevailed. The railways in use in 1676, and which at that period were a great novelty, are thus described by Lord Keeper Guildford. "The manner of the carriage of coals is by laying rails of timber from the colliery down to the river, exactly straight and parallel: and bulky carts are made with four rowlers fitting these rails, whereby the carriage is so easy, that one horse will draw down four or five chaldrons of coals, and is an immense benefit to the coal merchants." Sir Thomas Liddell, of Ravensworth Castle, is said to have laid the first waggon-way down from the Teams Colliery to the staith on the Tyne near to Derwenthaugh. But towards the close of the eighteenth century the wooden rails were succeeded by iron ones, and the horses in all places where there was an inclined plane substituted by a large coiling drum, by means of which the light waggons were drawn up the bank by the weight of the full ones in descent, there being a rope attached to each set of waggons, as well as to the drum, which was fixed at the top of the hill. This invention was by Mr. Barnes, and was first adopted at Benwell Colliery. With such great improvements in the method of transporting coal it is no wonder that a great increase should take place in the output, and at the very beginning of the present century the export was about 500,000 chaldrons from Newcastle alone. The following table, from authentic sources, showing the export of coal for the first decade of the present century, will be interesting to many.

Year.	Coastwise	Oversea.	Plantations.	Total Chaldrons.
1802	494,488	41,157	2,844	538,489
1803	505,137	42,808	1,516	549,461
1804	579,929	48,737	3,852	632,518
1805	552,827	47,213	2,360	602,400
1806	587,719	44,858	1,249	633,826
1807	534,371	25,494	1,848	561,713
1808	613,786	14,635	1,026	629,447
1809	550,221	12,640	1,992	564,853
1810	622,573	16,951	2,310	641,834
1811	634,371	15,818	2,136	652,325

Contrasted with this is the average export of coals for

last year, from the port of the Tyne, which amounted to upwards of 3,000,000 of tons.

Blyth was regarded as a branch of Newcastle, and as such has a burthen of 1s. duty a chaldron imposed upon all coal exported from that town ; but a petition representing Blyth and Hartley as distinct places and with separate interests, being presented to the House of Commons, the duty was ordered " to be laid down and no more taken up." In 1638, however, Blyth, together with Newcastle and Berwick, is found paying to the King " 1s. per chaldron costome, and to sell them again to the City of London not exceeding 17s. the chaldron in the summer, and 19s. the chaldron in the winter." The average vend of coals at Blyth and Hartley for the last ten years of the last century was about 35,000 chaldrons ; for the first ten years of the present century about 50,000 chaldrons ; and for the year 1872, about 220,000 tons.

Sunderland beginning to be of importance as a coal-exporting port in the year 1661, the Hostmen of Newcastle, jealous of its increasing consequence, endeavoured to shackle it with a duty of 1s. per chaldron. From 1704 to 1710, however, its annual average export was 65,760 chaldrons, and for the last five years of the first decade of the present century the trade done in coals at this port was as follows :—

Year.	Coastwise.	Foreign.	Total Chalds.
1806 ...	291,317 ...	2,622 ...	309,174
1807 ...	291,317 ...	4,274 ...	295,591
1808 ...	348,938 ...	2,058 ...	250,996
1809 ...	324,455 ...	973 ...	325,428
1810 ...	371,120 ...	1,889 ...	373,009

In the year 1872 the quantity of coals exported from the Wear amounted to nearly 300,000 tons.

The total output of coals in Great Britain in 1872 was 123,386,758 tons, and the number of persons employed in this production was 393,344. This estimate includes the whole of the persons employed in the mines, and the average production for each person employed was 314 tons. There was a considerable increase in the number of persons employed in 1872, but the precise numbers cannot be accurately given, as it was not compulsory on coal owners till last year to send in returns to the inspectors. The output in 1872

was likewise an advance on 1871, which may be stated to have been 117,186,278 tons. This is 7,000,000 tons more than the output of 1870, which only exceeds that of 1869 by 3,000,000. The number of tons of coals exported was in 1872, 13,212,000 ; in 1871, 12,748,000.

We shall now close this chapter by giving a few of the prices at which coal has been sold from time to time in London, Newcastle, and other places. In the year 1395, coal was sold at Whitby Abbey, at 3s. 4d. per chaldron ; in 1512, at Alnwick Castle, at 5s. for best, and 4s. 2d. for inferior ; in 1536, at Newcastle for 2s. 6d., at London for 4s. ; in the years 1550, 1582, 1585, and 1590, the prices in London were 12s., 6s., 8s., and 9s., respectively. In 1626, coals sold in Newcastle at 7s. 6d. per chaldron ; in 1635 and 1653 the prices in Newcastle were 9s. and 10s. per chaldron ; in 1637, in London they were 17s. in the summer, and 19s. in the winter and £4 in London in 1644, during the siege of Newcastle. In 1655, coals sold in London for 20s., and in Newcastle for 12s. per chaldron ; in 1667, for 30s. per chaldron in London ; in 1701, at 18s. 3d. in London, and 10s. 6d. in Newcastle ; and in 1703, at 11s. in Newcastle. Throughout the whole of the seventeenth century coals varied in the London market from 18s. to £2 per chaldron, and at the beginning of the present century they had advanced permanently to at least 20s. per ton. From that price they advanced to £3 per ton during the pitmen's strike in 1831-2, and to £3 during the strike of 1844. The ordinary price of coals after that time in London was 25s. per ton in summer time, and 30s. in the winter ; the price in Newcastle being from 10s. to 15s. per ton. Last year, however, the prices went up to £3 per ton in the London market, while in Newcastle they ranged from 18s. to 25s. per ton, the cause of the increase being stated to be the shorter hours during which the pitmen worked, and the increased rate of wages paid to them.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONDITION OF COAL MINERS BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

The early history of the men who worked the coal in the primitive ages of the coal trade would be very interesting

if it did not disclose a picture so terribly dark and repulsive. For many years speculators and adventurers leased most of the mines ; and seeking to make as much out of the investment as possible, ground down their workmen in a shocking and inhuman manner. Not only did they refuse to pay them a fair wage for their laborious and dangerous work—and the work was dangerous in a very high degree then—but they treated them as so many serfs who were utterly unworthy of any consideration whatever, Children of tender years were sent down into the pits to keep a trapdoor, or to help-up, whilst they should have been still in the nursery ; and owing to the long hours they were kept at work, it was impossible for them to see daylight except at the end of each week, or to catch a glimpse of it in the long days of summer. Females were also sent down into these dismal holes, and many continued to labour there till they became wives and mothers. They were even at this early period taunted with their barbarity and want of intelligence, when intelligence was not a very common commodity around them ; but those who taunted them, either forgot or wilfully refused to recollect that, situated as they were, it was almost impossible for them to acquire information. But notwithstanding these many drawbacks, the pitmen of Northumberland and Durham were by no means remarkable for their savagery, and if many of them exhibited a love for cock-fighting and other kindred sports then in vogue, they were not singular in their tastes, but had both example and precept from many who assumed to be their superiors. Now and then, goaded by a sense of wrong, they would band themselves together for mischief and inflict grievous damage to life and property ; but in their ordinary every day course of existence they were, as a whole, as intelligent and harmless as any community of men, whose minds were as dark as their work, could be.

A knowledge of the power of union seems to have dawned upon them at a very early date, for as far back as the 20th of August, 1662, there is a record of 2,000 colliers signing a petition to the King praying for redress of the grievances inflicted upon them by the coalowners and overmen. One of the grievances in this petition—and which was a fruitful source of complaint for succeeding centuries—

was the improper ventilation of the pits; and though accidents from fire-damp were frequent and direful, the owners invariably turned a deaf ear to the representation of their men on this, as well as on other matters. The petition above alluded to, though prepared for presentation to His Majesty, was never sent in, and probably the reason is that the men who had signed it were got at, and either cajoled or bullied into withdrawing their marks from the document, a kind of logic which was often adopted by employers towards their men in those "good old times."

But the men petitioned again, and by and bye the attention of men of science and learning was turned to the prevalence of fire-damp in mines, but without any immediate beneficial results. In 1676 the matter was engaging the attention of His Majesty's Ministers, and in that year we find Lord Keeper North, without regard to grammar, thus discoursing about fire-damp. "Damps or foul air kill insensibly; sinking another pit that the air may not stagnate is an infallible remedy. They are most in hot weather. An infallible trial is by a dog, and the candles show it. They seem to be heavy sulphureous air, not fit for breath; and I have heard some say that they would lie in the midst of the shaft and the bottom be clear. The flame of a candle will not kindle them so soon as the snuff; but they have been kindled by the striking fire with a tool. The blast is mighty violent, but the men have been saved by lying flat on their bellies."

From time to time the men rose in rebellion against working any longer in a certain pit, and often after remaining idle for a week or more, and sometimes after committing a number of extravagances, such as throwing the corves down the shaft, or upsetting the gin which was used for drawing the coals to bank, would return again to their dangerous and unhealthy labour, none the better for their resistance. Now and then the inhabitants of the locality were startled by terrible accidents arising from this cause, such as the explosion, at North Biddick Pit, on the Wear, where 72 persons—men, boys, and girls—were all launched into eternity at one fatal blast. Another calamity from the presence of fire-damp occurred in Lambton Colliery on the 22nd of August, 1766. The workmen, to the number

of 100, had just left off work, and were making their way "out-bye," leaving behind them three masons and three labourers to build up a partition to secure the coals taking fire from the lamp—a large grate of burning coals, which was kept burning at the bottom of the shaft to "put the air in motion," and to ventilate the mine. The lamp was lowered down at the request of the masons, to rarify the air, and no sooner was this done than a terrible explosion occurred, making its way up the pits, destroying men, horses, and all in its passage. The noise was heard for three miles around, and the blast of fire from the shaft was as visible as a flash of lightning. The men below were driven by the force up through the air shaft, or great tube, like balls out of a cannon, and everything that offered any resistance to the progress of the fatal blast shared the same fate. The neighbourhood was alarmed, and collected to render assistance, but found only heads, arms, and legs thrown out to a great distance from the mouths of the pit. The ground, for acres, was strewed with timber, coals, &c.; whilst all the partitions, trap-doors, corves, wood props, and linings, were carried away, together with the engine for drawing up coals, and all its apparatus. In 1805, another accident, which left 25 widows and 81 children unprotected and unprovided for, occurred at Hebburn; about the same period another occurred at Oxclose, near Washington, by which 18 widows and 70 children were deprived of their husbands and fathers; whilst the frightful accident which occurred on the 25th of May, 1812, at Felling Colliery, destroyed 92 persons, and left 41 widows and 133 children to the protection of the public.

These, together with similar disasters, less fatal in result, and more local in their effects, were the means of turning the serious attention of engineers to the subject of the ventilation of coal mines, and early in the present century the greater safety of the pitmen was secured by the substitution of the furnace shaft for the old-fashioned system of "putting the air in motion" by burning a grate of coals or "lamp" at the bottom of the upcast shaft.

In the year 1649, we are told that "many thousand people are employed in this trade of coals, many live by conveying them in waggons and wains to the river Tine,

and many are employed in conveying the coals in keels from the staiths aboard the ship." Of course, with the increase of the trade would come an increase in the number of men engaged in coal winning, and it is estimated that the Newcastle coal trade, at the beginning of the present century, employed something like 6,530 pitmen, whilst the total number of pitmen employed in the sea-sale collieries at Blyth, Hartley, Newcastle and Sunderland, amounted to 9,700.

CHAPTER III.

THE " BINDING " STRIKE OF 1810.

Though a gradual improvement had been taking place not only in the position of the miner when at work, but also in his domestic and social character out of the mines, still there was very great room for improvement in every respect. Wages became higher and labour more scarce ; but the men were not sufficiently educated to take advantage of this opportunity of bettering themselves, and the only benefit they derived from it was of a very temporary character. All learning was at that time positively discouraged amongst the lower ranks of society, and if any person, who had received a scanty stock of learning got into trouble the " pastors and masters and those in authority over " the poor people shook their heads ruefully and declared that the misfortune was the result of an impertinent curiosity to know as much as his or her betters. Under such circumstances it may readily be imagined that an educated pitman in the year 1800 was an exception ; and, though of course out of several thousands of men there were exceptions, they were very rare indeed. No great wonder is it then that whenever any dispute arose, the men, who had no self respect to lose, should take leave of their reason and commit desperate acts, which the most depraved of the class at the present day, would feel ashamed to be guilty of. Previous to the introduction of the steam winding engine, gins were used for hauling the corves to bank, and whenever any dispute took place, it was a favourite practice of the men where the strike had originated to visit the neighbouring collieries, and, by pulling down the gins, and

destroying the property, prevent the working of the colliery. Such was the most common method resorted to, to get redress of their grievances, and though they frequently met together in large numbers for various purposes connected with their work, there is no account of any organization of a permanent and stable character occurring amongst the miners till 1809. At the yearly binding of the collieries, which at this time took place in the month of October, the owners by a preconcerted arrangement amongst themselves, but in which the men were not allowed to have any part, decided that the latter should be engaged for a quarter, or a year and a quarter, in order to bring the binding time into the latter end of December or the beginning of January. To this the men at first agreed ; but upon mature deliberation they found that they had done wrong, and accordingly on the 16th of October, 1810, a meeting of delegates was held at Long Benton, when it was resolved to resist the alteration, and that a strike should take place, unless the owners would agree to continue the binding from the 18th October, as usual. The coal owners having a reason for desiring the change which they had arbitrarily declared should be made, refused to listen to the men, and the latter accordingly struck after the binding day. The delegates from the different collieries held frequent meetings, both in the Counties of Northumberland and Durham, for the purpose of keeping the men united, but they were hunted about from place to place by the owners and magistrates, assisted by the military, and committed to prison in such large numbers, till the prisons would hold no more. To such an extent was the old Gaol and House of Correction at Durham filled, that, for fear of infection, several were removed to the stables and the stable yards of the Bishop of Durham, where they were guarded by the Durham Volunteers, and special constables, and afterwards by the Royal Carmarthenshire Militia. Fresh seizures continued to be made, day by day, till finally the number imprisoned in the Bishop's stables amounted to nearly 300.

The men were now awakening to a sense of the serfdom in which they and their forefathers had too long existed, and their employers knew this, and were anxious to stifle their desire for freedom in its birth. It was preposterous

that men who had all along been in the habit of looking up with awe and reverence to their employers—men who had been taught, and had learnt the lesson too, to " order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters "—men who had shown no disposition hitherto to do anything beyond living and dying on this earth like brute creatures—it was perfectly intolerable that these men should refuse to bow quietly down at the imperious behests of their lords and masters ; it was a thing beyond all reason, and not to be allowed for a moment that these creatures should have a will of their own, much less to exercise one ; it was such an outrageous proposition, and such a piece of impertinence and presumption that these men should dare to take the liberty of thinking for themselves, that the united powers of the church, of the law, and of the army, must forthwith be launched to keep them in subjection, and prevent their presumptuous aspirations for freedom from becoming infectious. And, no doubt, the Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Durham slept a peaceful sleep in the calm consciousness of having served the cause of law and order by yielding up his stables for a prison-house, and probably he would not inquire too curiously as to whether such conduct as stifling a number of human beings in a horse stable was altogether and entirely consistent with the Christian charity, which is the fundamental doctrine of the church of which he was so great a dignitary.

Finding the men were determined to stand by their first decision, the Rev. Mr. Nesfield, a magistrate, and Captain Davis, of the Carmarthenshire Militia, had the good sense to regard them as rational beings, and undertook to compromise the matter. They made application to the prisoners in the Bishop's stables, whom they considered the leading men, but these men, one and all, refused to have anything to do in the matter, leaving it entirely to their companions at liberty ; who eventually settled it by removing the time of binding to the 5th of April, which time continued till the year 1844. In the course of this strike, which lasted about seven weeks, several other questions were brought forward, particularly the fines for deficient measure, and foul coals. Mr. Nesfield, having pledged himself that these things should be rectified

after the pits had again commenced working, and before the binding took place, he, by advertisement, called a meeting of the trade, to be held at Chester-le-Street on the morning of December 20th, and asked that two men from each colliery should attend. This was objected to by Mr. Martindale, the clerk of the trade of the river Wear, "lest such meeting should hazard a recurrence of the late disturbances," and because "the river Wear did not in itself constitute the coal trade, but that the river Tyne, Hartley, Blyth, and Cowpen, formed also a principal part thereof." This being also inserted in the papers, with Mr. Nesfield's answers to the objections contained therein, he, by another advertisement, dated December 26th, and addressed "to the coal owners of the rivers Tyne and Wear, and of Hartley, Blyth, and Cowpen," called a meeting to be held at the same place on January 3rd, 1811. This meeting took place, and to it were submitted "proposals for regulating the contracts between the coal owners and their miners on the rivers Tyne and Wear, and of Hartley, Blyth, and Cowpen, by the Rev. W. Nesfield, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Durham."

These proposals, which were agreed to by the coal owners, have been the basis of the agreement of the employers with the miners ever since. By the words "binding time" is meant the day from which the contract is made in one year until the same day in the next, when the year of service expires; but the time when the contract should be renewed was made changeable and uncertain—sometimes a month or six weeks before the old contract ceased.

Previous to 1810, when there was a great scarcity of miners, a bounty, called "binding money" was given, which, at some collieries, was as high as twenty guineas a man. The "binding money" in 1800 ranged from ten to twelve guineas; in 1804, from eighteen to twenty guineas; and in 1809 it was five guineas. Instead of taking advantage of this scarcity of labour, and its great demand, the poor pitmen eagerly took the proffered guineas and returned to their drudgery, too often after having squandered their bounty in the public-house, and lost their opportunity of asserting their value and their independence. Mr. Wilson

refers to binding time in the following lines of "The Pitman's Pay" :—

"Just like wor maisters when wor bun,
If men and lads be verra scant,
They wheedle us wi' yel and fun,
And coax us into what they want.
But myek yor mark, then snuffs and sneers
Suin stop yor gob and lay yor braggin ;
When yence yor feet are i' the geers,
Maw soul, they keep yor paunches waggin."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT, AND HEPBURN'S UNION.

From the settlement of the strike about the binding time things went on peaceably, and nothing occurred worthy of being recorded till the year 1825, when there was an attempt made to carry out a great social reform. Boys at this time used to be from seventeen to eighteen hours a day in the mine. Allowed to go down at the early, and almost infantile age of six years, the whole of their youthful days were spent in the dismal mine till they became 21 years of age ; and, during the whole of this long period, as we have already remarked, they hardly ever saw the happy, health-giving daylight and sunshine, except at short intervals. There were no schools, and no time to attend them, had there been so that education amongst miners in those days was out of the question, with the exception of one here and there. Amongst the few, however, there was one bold, honest, intelligent man, named Mackintosh, who was a miner, and felt the degraded state of his fellow-men, and who set about the great social work of co-operation, with a view to the amelioration of himself and his companions. Like Galileo, however, he lived before his time. A commencement was made at Hetton, in the County of Durham, on the co-operative principle, but it soon failed and it cannot be wondered at, when the prejudice and the ignorance that prevailed at this time is taken into consideration. The employers, scared at anything which had a tendency to make the men more self-reliant, set their foot upon the movement, and did their utmost to crush it out of existence. Poor Mackintosh, accused of being dishonest, mocked at and neglected by the

men he had endeavoured to benefit and elevate, and persecuted by the employers, was compelled to leave England and go to America, where he spent the remainder of his life.

There appears to have been no other organization of any kind amongst the miners till the year 1830, when the two counties joined together in one large Union, which was called " Hepburn's Union." Hepburn, who gave his name to this compact was a man of intelligence, tact, perseverance, and honesty of purpose, and one who was calculated to do, as he did, a great amount of good work during the time he laboured amongst the miners. About this time there were signs of intelligence beginning to spread amongst the miners. They began to understand the great value of public sympathy, and to lay their grievances before the public, and to agitate through the two counties for the establishment of a union of the miners of Northumberland and Durham. It was only at this time the public became aware by means of this agitation, that the miners as a class, were so barbarously treated, by their requests for protection being refused, and by their being kept in the mines for so many hours in their youth. Having formed a strong union—the first that had as yet been formed amongst them—the men began to feel their strength, and in the year 1831, the whole of the miners in Northumberland and Durham came out on strike. for a general advance of wages, and shorter hours. On March the 12th, 1831, an immense number of pitmen from the collieries of the Tyne and Wear, assembled together on the Black Fell near Eighton Banks, in the County of Durham, for the purpose of adopting certain resolutions, and considering the best means of obtaining from their employers an increase of wages ; and again on the 21st of the same month, another large meeting of the miners of the two counties, was held on the Town Moor, Newcastle, for the same purpose. During the forenoon, great numbers passed through the town of Newcastle in procession ; apparently without exciting the least uneasiness or alarm among the inhabitants ; and it was calculated that nearly 20,000 persons had assembled by one o'clock at the place of meeting. Several speakers addressed the meeting, and detailed in homely but energetic language, the grievances under which they considered themselves to labour. This

did not appear to be so much connected with the scant remuneration paid for the work, as with some objectionable parts in the bond of service, the chief of which was the power of the owners to lay the men idle on the occurrence of the most trifling accidents to the pits, the engines, or even to the waggon ways ; wages on these occasions, being often discontinued for three days. Another source of complaint was the subjection of the men to the caprice of the viewers or agents, not only for a continuance of work, but even for shelter for their wives and families, as they were liable to be turned out of their houses, either on the completion, or non-fulfilment of the articles of the bond, arising from mutual disagreement. They also discussed the injustice of being obliged to remain idle at Christmas time without any compensation, as well as the length of time boys were immured in the collieries, to the destruction of health, and exclusion of almost every chance of education or moral improvement. In the course of the proceedings it was resolved to petition Parliament, and subscribe sixpence each to send deputies to London with the petitions ; to continue to work, unbound, after their period of service had expired, if the owners would allow them, otherwise to cease working, and claim parish relief or magisterial interference, until their remonstrances were attended to, and the bond altered accordingly, and it was also resolved that the men of every colliery should meet twice a week ; that each pit should send a delegate to form a general committee for carrying the resolutions into effect ; and further, that no man should in future buy meat, drink, or candles, from any one connected with the collieries. This last resolution was intended to put a stop to the existence of those establishment known as " Tommy Shops," a system by which a miner and his family was placed completely at the mercy of the colliery owners. The " Tommy Shop " was generally kept by a relative of the viewer of the colliery, the pitman was compelled to purchase his provisions there, and his wages were confiscated at the pay day to settle any balance there might be due to the " Tommy Shop " keeper. No wonder the men found such a system irksome, and endeavoured to relieve themselves from it. While the meeting was progressing, Mr. Archibald Reed, the Mayor of Newcastle, appeared in the

midst of the assembly for a few minutes, and advised the leaders to inculcate order and peace as the surest means of obtaining justice, and a vote of thanks was accorded him for the friendly advice he had given them, and for the kind offer he made to act as the medium of communication between them and their employers, as far as he could conveniently. These resolutions were severally put, and carried unanimously by a show of hands, which, from the immense number held up, had a very great effect. The whole proceedings were conducted without the least disturbance, and the miners returned to their homes in the afternoon in good order, and so ended the first great demonstration of miners in Newcastle. Many have taken place since, and larger numbers of men have taken part in them, but people now begin to expect good behaviour from pitmen as well as from other classes of men, and would be surprised if they, as a body, conducted themselves otherwise. It was very different, however, sixty years ago, before the schoolmaster had been abroad in the pit villages. The good people of Newcastle then expected mischief when so large a number as 20,000 of those "terrible and savage pitmen" came from their own poor districts into the rich and wealthy Newcastle, and when the foot-fall of the last of them had died away from the town, no doubt the shopkeepers would feel agreeably surprised, and heave a sigh of relief at the evacuation of their unwelcome visitors. Time works wonders, and it is now interesting to see with what equanimity the tradesmen of Newcastle at present regard the appearance of ten times as many miners.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1831. MISCONDUCT OF THE MEN. THE MILITARY CALLED OUT.

The year for which the men at the various collieries on the Tyne and Wear had bound themselves having expired on the 5th of April, 1831, the whole of them refused to enter into fresh engagements with their employers until the differences which then existed between them were adjusted. The employers, it was said, had agreed that the boys should in future work only twelve hours a day, and that the work-

men should be paid their wages in money, and be at liberty to buy goods where they chose. These were great points to have secured, but the men had made up their minds to have the whole of their grievances remedied, and continued to insist on other conditions. On Wednesday, April 6th, the day following the binding day, a great number of miners met on the Black Fell, with the hope that some further arrangements would be proposed by the coal owners; but as no proposition was forthcoming, they dispersed with a resolution not to return to their work on the former terms. In the meantime parties of military had been placed in readiness, to assist the civil power in preserving peace, and several Northumberland magistrates, wholly unconnected with the collieries, offered themselves as mediators between the coal owners and the miners. The magistrates announced that they would be ready to meet the parties at the Moot Hall, Newcastle, on Monday, the 11th April, in order to try and arrange the dispute, and though the delegates of the men presented themselves ready to enter upon a conference, the magistrates never came. Some of the collieries resumed work with a number of men who went in on the old terms, and were accordingly regarded as "black-legs," by their companions who remained out to fight the battle to its end. On the 18th April, from 1,200 to 1,500 miners visited the collieries in the neighbourhood of Blyth and Bedlington, and there laid the pits off work by various destructive devices, and threatened to set fire to them if their demands were not complied with. At Bedlington Glebe Pit, they tore the corves to pieces, threw them into the shaft, and did considerable damage to the machinery. From Bedlington they marched towards Netherton, but a strong opposition having been collected there against them, they retreated. On their return they entered the house of the resident viewer at Cowpen Colliery, who was not at all a favourite with the men. They broke open the cellar, and took everything that they could eat and drink out of it, but did no damage to the furniture, nor yet hurt any of the family in the house. On leaving the house they gave a promise that they would visit him again, if he attempted to get the pits to work before they got their terms conceded; and shortly after

this unwelcome visitation the following laconic letter was sent to him :—

" I was at yor hoose last neet, and myed mysel very comfortable. Ye hey nee family, and yor just won man on the colliery, I see ye hev a greet lot of rooms, and big cellars, and plenty wine and beer in them, which I got ma share on. Noo I naw some at wor colliery that has three or fower lads and lasses, and they live in won room not half as gude as yor cellar. I don't pretend to naw very much, but I naw there shudnt be that much difference. The only place we can gan to o the week ends is the yel hoose and hev a pint. I dinna pretend to be a profit, but I naw this, and lots o ma marrows na's te, that wer not tret as we owt to be, and a great filosopher says, to get noledge is to naw wer ignerent. But weve just begun to find that oot, and ye maisters and owners may luk oot, for yor not gan to get se much o yor awn way, wer gan to hev some o wors now. I divent tell ye ma nyem, but I was one o yor unwelcome visitors last neet."

On the following morning a large number of men went to Jesmond Dene Colliery, belonging to Mr. R. B. Sanderson, the father of the present much-respected gentleman of that name, and did considerable injury to the machinery, throwing it down the pit and endangering the lives of some workmen who were in the mine. The whole of the mining districts were in a terribly disturbed state. Large bodies of violent and lawless men traversed the country doing a great many extravagant acts, and doing much silly and altogether unjustifiable mischief. On the Wear they were especially violent ; at one colliery they even went to the length of threatening to murder the horsekeepers if they went down to feed the poor horses. A great number of special constables were at once sworn in to protect property, and the Deputy-Lieutenant of the County issued an order for calling out the Northumberland and Newcastle Yeomanry. Part of the 82nd Regiment of Foot, which was then stationed at Sunderland Barracks, marched from thence to the neighbourhood of Hetton, where they were ordered to remain during the unsettled state of the workmen belonging to the collieries of that district. A detachment of 80 marines and three subalterns, under the command of Major Mitchell, sailed from Portsmouth for the Tyne on account of the disturbances among the collieries, and so serious was the case regarded by the authorities, that the vessel sailed in less than an hour after the sailing orders were received.

On the 21st of April, a large meeting of miners was held at Jarrow, each colliery bearing a banner, with the name of the colliery and various mottoes. The meeting lasted for a considerable time, and after listening to addresses from several speakers, who exhorted them all to conduct themselves orderly, and to keep the peace, they resolved unanimously to adhere to their former resolutions. The meeting then broke up, and the miners returned peaceably to their homes. On the 5th of May, another large meeting took place on the Black Fell, where the miners were met by the Marquis of Londonderry, accompanied by a military escort. His lordship addressed the men at considerable length, requesting them to disperse, and promising to meet their delegates at Newcastle, and quietly talk over their differences, which they immediately acceded to. A meeting, in consequence, was held in the Coal Trade Office, Newcastle, but without any arrangement being made. Another meeting took place on the following day, but the men still held out against the terms offered them by the owners ; and the whole of the collieries, with the exception of two or three, which had been partially at work for a few days under the protection of the military, were laid completely idle. From the long strike of the miners the want of coals was at this time severely felt by the manufacturers and inhabitants of different towns. For some time detachments of the regular troops, horse and foot, assisted by parties of Colonel Bell's Cavalry and Foot Yeomanry, were stationed in the neighbourhood of Wallsend ; sentries constantly patrolled the immediate locality of certain pits for the protection of the engines and premises, and the men who were at work ; each night the country was scoured by squadrons of cavalry in various directions, as the idle men were at this time showing a very turbulent disposition ; and, rather than accede to the terms offered, many of them, with their wives and children, were wandering about Northumberland and Durham, begging. On the 16th of May, a number of men on strike attempted to prevent several bound men from going to their work at South Shields Colliery. The bound men insisted on going to carry out their contract, and others, belonging to the colliery, assisted them. There was every prospect of a serious riot resulting, when Mr. Fairless, a magistrate,

appeared upon the scene with a party of marines, and the men on strike at once prudently left the field in possession of the workmen.

The next morning an immense number of men congregated at Hebburn Colliery, and threw down the shaft all the corves, rolleys, and loose materials they could lay their hands upon, to the great terror of the men below. The men were proceeding to commit other acts of violence, when they were prevented by the timely arrival of the military. About this time two troops of the 3rd Dragoons arrived in Newcastle, and four troops of Colonel Bell's cavalry, which had been in service for upwards of a month, were then dismissed to their homes.

About the middle of June, the man were victorious, the masters finding it impossible to hold out against them any longer. The men were very jubilant about their victory, the first unmistakable victory they had ever yet achieved over their hard taskmasters, and in some places showed a disposition to go to excess in their joy. One of the results of the strike was the establishment of a working day of 12 hours for boys, instead of one of almost without limit. This strike, like all movements of a similar nature amongst all classes of men, called forth the worst passions of both men and masters. The latter displayed their ill-feeling and hatred of the men, by using their influence and wealth to bring a large number of mercenaries into the counties to hunt their men from place to place like beasts of the chase, and the men resorted to all manner of brutal and lawless reprisals. There is no justification whatever to be uttered on behalf of the men for the many violent acts of which they were guilty, but there is less justification for the conduct of the employers in burdening the County with the charge of a number of soldiers, whose very presence could have no other tendency than that of exasperating the men to defiance. Every man has a perfect right to protect his own property, but no man has a right, if he quarrels with his neighbour, to assume that his neighbour is going to set his house on fire, and plant a policeman there to prevent him. But this was the policy of the mine owners in this long and memorable contention. Before the men had shown any disposition to be mischievous they were alarmed with the bright glitter of

the huzzar's sabre, and the death-dealing point of the fusilier's bayonet, and were driven by this martial appearance to measure their strength with the military forces. Had they refrained from calling in the aid of the soldier till the desperate and violent acts of the men compelled such a course, it is probable that they would not have been necessary at all, and that the ordinary civil authority would have been found amply sufficient to cope with any disorder which would prevail. Still in all fairness it must be admitted that often, in the heat of the struggle, the men were guilty of cowardly acts, committing injury to life and property, and that they often conducted themselves in a manner which justified the presence of a large force to restrain them from going to a dangerous excess.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION. THE WALDRIDGE COLLIERY OUTRAGE. THE LONG STRIKE OF 1832. EJECTMENTS AT HETTON AND FRIAR'S GOOSE. MURDER OF MR. FAIRLESS.

On the 13th of August, in the same year, the miners of the two Counties of Northumberland and Durham, met on Boldon Fell, between Gateshead and Sunderland, in the County of Durham. During the forenoon, the roads in the vicinity of the meeting place presented an unsual bustle, the men walking in procession from the different collieries, bearing flags and banners and accompanied by bands of music. The banners were numerous, and of the gayest description, nearly all being embellished with a painted design, and with a motto more or less connected with the recent struggle between the miners and their employers. The object of this meeting was to vote an address to His Majesty, thanking him for his beneficent attention to the wants of his people in having assented to the Reform Bill, and for the support he had given to his ministers. About twelve o'clock the speakers, who consisted of a few of the delegates from each colliery, mounted a cart and proceeded to the business of the day. Mr. Hepburn first presented himself, and recommended order, sobriety, and attention to

their religious duties, as the best means they could adopt to preserve the advantages they had gained, and to keep up in the public mind that favourable feeling which had been so generally exhibited towards them during the strike. He was followed in a similar strain by Robert Arkle, Charles Parkinson, B. Pile, and R. Atkinson, the latter of whom recommended that Hepburn, who had been one of the most active promoters and sustainers of the strike, should be appointed and maintained by the union, to visit the different collieries, and enforce the rules of the association, the necessity of good conduct, and the duty of the men attending to the education of the younger branches of their families. The addresses, which were delivered with peculiar fervour, were patiently listened to and loudly applauded; but the topic least commented on was that which they had met chiefly to discuss. They had no resolutions prepared respecting the address to His Majesty to lay before the meeting. It was, however, at length resolved that the delegates should meet that day week and prepare an address; and that in the meantime, the signatures of the workmen at each colliery should be procured for the purpose of affixing them to it. Thanks having been voted to the public for their sympathy, and to the King and his excellent ministers, particularly Lords Grey, Brougham, and Durham, the bands were ordered to strike up the National Anthem, which they did very effectively, amidst tremendous cheering. The immense assemblage then dispersed in a similar order to that in which it had arrived.

On the 24th December, upwards of 1,000 men assembled together at Waldridge Colliery, near Chester-le-Street, in in the County of Durham, and, while from twenty to thirty men were at work in the mine, they there stopped the engine kept for pumping water, and then threw large iron tubs, wooden cisterns, corves and other articles, down the shaft, by which the workmen below were placed in the utmost danger. For the purpose of securing the apprehension and conviction of the persons concerned in these outrages His Majesty's government offered a reward of 250 guineas, and a free pardon to accomplices; whilst the owners of the colliery also offered a reward of 250 guineas to any but the real actors in the outrage. At the Durham Spring

Assizes, held on the 2nd March, 1832, seven men named James Becketts, Cuthbert Turnbull, John Rippon, Samuel Brown, David Kelly and Thomas Moore, were put upon their trial for these outrages, and after a patient investigation the jury retired for about ten minutes and returned with a verdict finding Brown, Rippon, Moor, Middleton, Kelly and Becketts guilty, and Turnbull not guilty. The first three were sentenced to fifteen months, Middleton and Kelly to 12 months, and Beckett to six months' imprisonment. It appeared upon the trial, that the miners employed at this colliery had refused to work, and in consequence the owners had employed some lead miners, who were down the mine at the time of the outrage. Mr. Hepburn and other leading men connected with the union deprecated in strong terms this misconduct, and said it was not the proper way for men to proceed to get their grievances adjusted. " And unfortunately," he added, " the innocent were suffereing for the guilty, as the owners and authorities were determined to punish some one, and if he was only a miner belonging to the union it is sufficient for them ; for he knew of some men who had been taken from their bed and imprisoned, who were never near the riot."

In 1832 the miners made a further demand, and came out on strike. On the 3rd of March in this year, the bonds being near a close, a general meeting of the men of the two counties was held at Bolden Fell for the purpose of reviewing their position. The men began to arrive from their respective collieries shortly after nine o'clock in the morning, and by eleven o'clock there was an immense number on the ground, the men from each colliery bringing with them banners, bearing various mottoes and devices. One of these was surrounded with a deep border of crape, but was so with reference only to the death of a person at the colliery to which it belonged. The owners, jealous of the growing strength of the union, had decided that at the next yearly binding, no man, being a member of the Miners' Union, should be bound, and consequently should not be allowed to work at their collieries. The men who had joined the Association had by this time become convinced of the advantage of unity, and showed no disposition to leave the union at the behest of their employers. The principal object

of this meeting was, therefore, to take such measures as were best calculated to defeat the owners ; the whole of the men being determined not to bind unless the Union men were also bound. Mr. Hepburn, chairman, urged upon his hearers the necessity of all their future proceedings being strictly legal. The other speakers were Waddle, Parkinson, Arkle, and Atkinson, who all urged the necessity of supporting the Union for the maintenance of each other, and asserted that no less than £10,000 had been paid in the last twelve months from its funds. After a few remarks had been made deprecating the men on the one hand, for the outrages which had been committed—and the unfairness of the authorities on the other, for seizing whoever they came across belonging to the Union, whether guilty or not, the assemblage was further urged in all future steps, strictly to keep the peace. The meeting then dispersed.

On April 14th in the same year, another large general meeting was held on Black Fell. At 11 o'clock, Mr. Hepburn was called to the chair, and after he had opened the profeedings, several speakers addressed the meeting, all enforcing the necessity of supporting the Union, which they said would eventually baffle the machinations of their employers. Before closing the meeting, Mr. Hepburn addressed the men in a very encouraging strain. " Let them, he said, "make a few sacrifices, and twelve months would teach them a great deal. Things would come round in such a way that there would be need of more miners than were ever employed in England before, as pits were then being sunk to the north and south of them in their own counties as well as in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, all of which would want men to work them. It had been said that they ought to get knowledge, and he would teach them how to do that. Let libraries be established amongst the collieries, which might be done for about a shilling a man in the year, and that he thought was obtaining knowledge at a cheap rate. In conclusion, he urged them to part quietly, and let the world see their determination to support good order." The meeting then broke up, the men formed under their respective banners, and left the place of meeting in a most peaceable manner.

All the collieries being now at a stand still, the owners had in many instances engaged new hands to take the places

of those on strike, but the latter still retaining possession of their dwellings, which were now required for the strangers, there seemed but one of two alternatives left for the adoption of the owners, either to submit to their late servants, or to put those newly engaged in possession of the houses. They determined on this latter course, and commenced the work of forcible ejection, which was first begun at Hetton. Proper steps had been taken to prevent as much as possible any disturbance, special constables were appointed, a strong force of London police were in readiness, assisted by a detachment of the Queen's Bays, and those who refused to join the combined workmen were furnished with arms for their own protection. While families and furniture were handed to the door in the presence of the authorities no resistence was offered, but as the evening drew near there were many ominous signs that the peace which had characterised the proceedings by day would be broken by night. Many of the union men assembled in a large group, several of them well armed, and occasional shots were fired by them. A terrible vengeance was taken upon one of the bound men named Errington, who was found the next morning dead. On the following Monday morning the coroner, Mr. T. C. Maynard, arrived, and a jury having been summoned, they immediately proceeded with the inquest, when, after a long and tedious investigation which lasted about ten days, a verdict of " wilful murder," was returned against George Strong and John Turnbull, as principals, and against John Moore and Luke Hutton, as accessories before the fact. These persons were committed to Durham Gaol under an escort of cavalry, it being apprehended that a rescue would be attempted by their comrades, by whom they were loudly cheered. Errington was one of the few miners at Hetton Colliery who had consented to be rebound. He had been a strenuous advocate of the union, but had seceded from its councils before the commencement of the strike at present under notice. More special constables were now sworn in, and arms supplied them ; part of their instructions being that whenever they found a few miners standing together they were to take them and lock them up either in the colliery stables, or in the empty houses. The necessary results of such a general order as

this was, that a large number of arrests were made, and those taken were treated with great injustice and indignity. Some of them were bound hand and foot against the mangers in the stalls all night, with neither food nor water, and if they attempted to make the least resistance, a cutlass or pistol was held to their faces. It was not the riotous and disorderly persons that were mostly punished, but chiefly those who had been taking leading parts in the union, and who had taken no part whatever in the disorders. All sorts of inducements were held out to them to go to work during the time they were undergoing these punishments, and as many gave way to threats and cajolery, the owners succeeded in getting the collieries to work again, in some parts. Jealousy, too, was beginning to make its appearance amongst the men ; and the owners' agents were very industrious in their endeavours to foment this discontent and dissatisfaction against the leaders, by freely circulating all sorts of reports about them, as well as about other collieries going to work. It was difficult to get any meetings up at the collieries amongst themselves, as the men were not permitted to congregate for fear of arrest, and as newspapers were not much in circulation in those days, they had only to rely on their delegate bringing the report of what was going on from the delegate meeting.

After the work of ejectment had been finished at Hetton, the ejecting party proceeded to Friar's Goose Collieries, about two miles east of Newcastle. On reaching the colliery they were met by a great number of miners who were assembled there. Mr. Forsyth, who was leading the constables, delivered to his men two rounds of cartridges containing swan shot, with strict orders not to fire till commanded. He then advanced, and was greeted by three defiant cheers from the miners. This act of delivering shot to the constables seriously exasperated the miners, and, coupled with the insolence of those who were busy putting their furniture to the door, and who, not content with bundling their furniture to the door as if it were rubbish, kept calling them cowards, aroused in the breasts of the men a very dangerous spirit. While the police were still proceeding with the work of ejectment, having entered the house of a miner named Thomas Carr for that purpose, a large

number of miners attacked the premises appointed as a guard-house, overpowered the sentry, and carried off the guns. The noise and shouting brought Mr. Forsyth to the place, he drew his cutlass and endeavoured to make his way through the immense masses of men to the assistance of the police, and he was twice knocked down in his attempt ; but at length with great difficulty he reached his companions. The latter were most unhappily stationed in a narrow lane which was overlooked by a hill on each side, and on which the miners stood and threw brickbats, stones, and other missiles at them. The constables, thus pressed, and considering their lives in danger, fired amongst the crowd, and then, making a rush, got out of their unfortunate position and gained a rising ground near to the house of Mr. Easton, the viewer, Some of the miners fired at them as they retreated, and five or six of them were wounded, and one severely so. Mr. Forsyth was wounded in the head and leg with stones, and one of the special constables was also severely cut about the head. The police, from the place of their retreat, sent off two men express for the military, but the miners, suspecting their object, obstructed their passage as much as possible. About twelve o'clock one of these messengers galloped through Newcastle on his way to the Barracks, without his hat, with a huge cut in his face, and with one of his ribs broken from the injuries he had received. The soldiers set out without delay for Friar's Goose, attended by the Mayor of Newcastle and the Rev. Mr. Collinson, Rector of Gateshead ; but no further disturbances had taken place, and by the time of their arrival the men had in a great measure dispersed. The police proceeded to search all the houses in the neighbourhood, and apprehended every man they found in them, whether he had been present at the riot or not. Two men, who said they had just come from a delegate meeting, tried to explain to the police that they were not present at the riot ; but they were knocked down and tied in a cart. One, being more resolute than the other, and knowing that he was innocent, tried to make his escape, on which the police sat upon him with their knees on his breast, and when they arrived at Newcastle Goal he was so much exhausted that they had to carry him, not knowing whether he was dead or alive. There were upwards of forty

others, including three women, taken at this time to Newcastle Gaol. They were all subsequently committed for trial at the next Durham Assizes, and after their committal were taken to Durham Gaol under an escort of cavalry. Many others, who were arrested, were either bound over to keep the peace, or discharged.

The position of the miners was now a very dangerous and difficult one. In most places they had the mortification of seeing their houses occupied by strangers who had come to usurp their place at work. Their villages were filled with insolent and tyrannical policemen or special constables who were pampered by the owners with beer and other refreshments, and who showed their gratitude to the masters by knocking down any of the men on strike who came in their way, and by locking them up if they presumed to say anything. The owners were gradually and sensibly getting the upper hand of the men, and crushing the union out of existence, but notwithstanding this, and all the difficulties and the many acts of injustice they had to contend with, a number of the men still determined to stand out. On the 26th of May, another general meeting was held at Boldon Fell, Mr. T. Hepburn in the chair, when several resolutions were passed, but none of them contained anything betokening a speedy arrangement of the differences with the coal owners. Men, women, and children were seen begging about the district ; the men, hounded and hunted by the police and military, their wives insulted by the wives of the other men who ought to have had more generosity, and their bairns laughed at and mocked at by other children. By the opposition of the owners, the support the latter got from the authorities of the country, and the punishments which several brave men had to endure, more men were every week breaking away from the ranks of the union, and recommencing work, and there was now a general desire to get to work.

On the 11th of June, about five o'clock in the afternoon, as Mr. Nicholas Fairless, of South Shields, a magistrate for the County of Durham, was riding to Jarrow Colliery, he was accosted by two miners, who seized and dragged him from his horse, and felled him to the ground. He was left lying in an almost lifeless state, and from the dreadful nature

of the wounds in the skull he expired on the 21st of June. One of the murderers was apprehended, but the other escaped. A reward of £300 was offered by the vestry of St. Hilda and the Government for his apprehension, but he was never found, though it is believed that he stopped in the district till after the execution of his comrade, and finally visited his body where it was gibbeted on Jarrow Slakes, after which he departed for America.

On the 16th of June another general meeting was held, which was about the last one of this association, and there was a great falling off in the number of attendants. The strike had now lasted for upwards of two months, and had been characterized by great severity on the part of the owners, and by occasional outbursts of violence and bloodshed on the part of the men. The pits in most places, worked by strangers and those who had returned dispirited to their work, were now in almost full operation again, and it was felt by many of the most sanguine that the men had suffered a defeat. But they were not desirous of expressing their belief in this respect, because they were aware that one great object of the masters was to break their "rebellious and mutinous spirit," as it was termed, and they had sagacity enough to know that, if they capitulated too easily they might bid farewell to all independence for some time to come. Animated by this spirit, they therefore determined to hold out in the face of so many difficulties, even when prudence would have dictated the adoption of a different course.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE STRIKE. THE MURDER OF CUTHBERT SKIPSEY BY A POLICEMAN. THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF JOBLING. THE END OF THE STRIKE, AND DISSOLUTION OF HEPBURN'S UNION.

Though in comparative small numbers, the miners on strike still continued to meet together at various places to discuss their grievances and to endeavour to rally a few adherents around their now fast dissolving union, but all in vain. The men at work had all been employed conditionally on their having nothing whatever to do with this association, and if they were not prompted by any

regard for honesty to keep their word to their employers, the most of them had had too hard an experience during the struggle to think of running the risk of being thrown out of employment and proscribed again. Instead therefore of making fresh converts to the union, Mr. Hepburn and his brave followers saw his band every week growing smaller. At a meeting of men on strike which took place at Chirton, near North Shields, on the 8th of July, an affray took place between them and the special constables. Mr. Cuthbert Skipsey, a miner belonging to Percy Main, who bore the character of being a very quiet, inoffensive man, at this time was trying to make peace between the parties, when George Weddle, a policeman, drew his pistol and deliberately shot him dead on the spot. Mr. Skipsey was a man very much respected at the colliery where he lived, and by his tragic end a widow and six children were left to the protection of the public. On August the 3rd, after a trial which continued about twelve hours, Weddle was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. On the first of August, William Jobling was tried at the Durham assizes and found guilty of the murder of Nicholas Fairless as previously stated. He was sentenced to be hanged on the third, and his body to be afterwards hung in chains near the scene of the murder. The sentence was carried out soon after twelve o'clock, on the 3rd of August, on the drop erected in front of the County Court at Durham. Jobling exhibited on his way to the scaffold the utmost resignation and fortitude, and denied being the principal in the fatal transaction which led to his ignominous death. His step was firm as he entered upon the scaffold ; but the power of articulation failed him, and he was unable to address the spectators as he had stated it to be his intention to do. Just as the fatal bolt was about to be withdrawn, a person near the scaffold cried out " Farewell, Jobling ! " and he instantly turned his head in the direction whence the voice proceeded, which displaced the cord, and consequently protracted his sufferings which continued for some minutes. The voice was supposed to be Armstrong's, for whom there was at that time such a large reward offered. After hanging an hour the body was cu down and conveyed to the gaol, where it remained till the

gibbet was ready. Fifty of the 8th Hussars, and 50 of the 15th regiment of foot, were drawn up in front of the drop, where they remained till the body was cut down. A portion of these regiments had marched from Newcastle to Durham for the purpose, as well as to escort the body to Jarrow Slake. After the body was conveyed into the gaol the clothes were taken off, and it was then covered over with pitch. The clothes in which he was hanged were afterwards replaced, and on Monday morning, 6th of August, at seven o'clock, the body was taken in a small four-wheeled waggon drawn by two horses, from Durham, escorted by a troop of Hussars, and two companies of infantry, the undersheriff, gaoler, and officers of the gaol, bailiffs, &c. They proceeded by way of Chester-le-Street, Picktree, Sludge Row, Portobello, over the Black Fell, to White Mare Pool, and thence by the South Shields turnpike road, to Jarrow Slake, were they arrived at half-past ten o'clock. The spectators were not numerous, there being perhaps about 1,000 persons present. On the arrival of the cavalcade at Jarrow Slake, it was joined by Mr. Bryan Abbs and Mr. William Lorraine, magistrates of the county. The military were then drawn up, and formed two sides of a square, the cavalry on the right and the infantry on the left, and the body was lifted from the waggon. It was cased in flat bars of iron, of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth, the feet were placed in stirrups, from which a bar of iron went up each side to the head, and ended in a ring, by which the body was suspended ; a bar from the collar went down the breast, and another down the back ; there were also bars in the inside of the legs, which communicated with the above, and cross bars at the ankles, the knees, the thighs, the breast and shoulders ; the hands were hung by the side, and covered with pitch ; and the face was pitched and covered with a white grave cloth. Being laid on a hand barrow, the body was conveyed to the gibbet, which was fixed nearly opposite the spot where the murder was committed, and about 100 yards within the slake from high water mark. The gibbet, which was fixed in a stone $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton weight sunk in the slake, was formed of a square piece of fir timber, 21 feet long, and top projecting about 3 feet, with strong bars of iron up ach side to prevent it being sawn down. At high water, the

tide covered the base of the gibbet about 4 or 5 feet, leaving 16 or 17 feet visible. The body having been hoisted up and secured, a police guard was placed near the spot, and remained there for some time. Jobling was the first person gibbeted under the new act of Parliament, which ordered the bodies of murderers to be hung in chains. The body when gibbetted had on the clothes in which he appeared on his trial—blue jacket and trousers, the heel quarters of his boots were down, his head was thrown quite back so that his face appeared as if looking upward.

The indignation of the people was beginning to be expressed in very strong terms as to the injustice of the law, by its penalties being carried out to such an extent in the case of Jobling for shooting a magistrate, whilst Weddle, the policeman, who was convicted of the murder of Mr. Skipsey, a miner, only got six months imprisonment, when during the very dark night between the 31st of August and the 1st of September, the body was stolen from the gibbet and secretly disposed of by some unknown person ; nor was there any effort made to discover the parties, as the authorities seemed only too glad that such a hideous sight was removed from the district ; in fact it was generally thought that some one had been paid by the authorities to take the body away. The strike by this time was now fairly at an end, and the large number of new hands which the owners had brought from other counties, gave them an opportunity of choosing who they liked amongst their old servants. Indeed so overstocked was the labour market, that large numbers could not get work for a time ; and as the men who had gone to work dare not subscribe for them, if even they had been willing to do so, thus many of the miners and their families were at the point of starvation, besides having no houses to live in, their furniture still remaining in farmers' byres and hay lofts, in public house long rooms, and by roadsides. This state of things happily did not continue very long, for the coal trade striking out very brisk at the time the greater portion of them got employed, with the understanding that they should have nothing more to do with the union. But on no account could the leading advocates of the union get work. Mr. Hepburn and others who had fought so hard and faithfully for the welfare

of the whole body of men, were now prevented from getting work at any colliery in the two counties. Hepburn commenced to sell tea about the colliery districts, but in many instances the men dare not countenance him, whilst others who had the chance neglected him till he was almost driven to starvation. The great man who had led the miners during their struggles in 1831 and 1832, now very shabbily clad, no one to converse with, broken down in spirits, proscribed and hunted, had to go and beg at the Felling for employment. The viewer, knowing he was a man of his word, put this proposition to him, "I will give you work if you will promise to have nothing more to do with unions." He paused for a moment before consenting; but he did consent, and on those conditions he was employed at the Felling, and died very recently in Newcastle.

The seed had been sown, but Mackintosh, Hepburn and others, like many other public workers, did not live to see the results of their labours. Mr. Hepburn in his latter days often used to say "great results cannot be achieved at once." He also very often used the quotation: "To know how to wait is the secret of success." "Time and patience," says the eastern proverb, "change the mulberry leaf to satin," and patiently relying on the work of time, this great man spent his latter days, waiting for the success he had so ardently fought for, and endeavoured to command in his youth. Relying patiently on the effects of time, he had the satisfaction of seeing the seed he had sown in the fertile earth of men's minds germinating and putting forth verdant leaves—leaves never more to be seared or withered, but which, nourished by the pure air of truth, and sunned by the sunshine of spreading intelligence and wisdom, should ultimately blossom, and bear fruit that should be choice amongst the choice fruits of the earth. In this calm reliance on the future he would say "If we have not been successful, at least we, as a body of miners, have been able to bring our grievances before the public; and the time will come when the golden chain which binds the tyrants together, will be snapped, when men will be properly organized, when coal owners will only be like ordinary men, and will have to sigh for the days gone by. It only needs time to bring this about." These were almost the last remarks Hepburn ever made in public.

THOMAS HEPBURN.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONDITION OF THE MEN AFTER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION. FORMATION OF A NATIONAL UNION. THE STRIKE AT WINGATES AND THORNLEY. DETAILS OF THE PROSECUTION OF THE MEN.

The union of the miners now being broken up, it seemed that the public cared little or nothing about their affairs. The employers commenced making reduction after reduction in their wages, and the miners had no power to resist it, being so dispirited with the recent struggles, and being besides threatened to be turned away from the colliery if they made the least complaint. The catalogue of their grievances were black and manifold, and to resist those tyrannical aggressions upon their rights, they formed themselves into another association called the "Miners Association of Great Britain and Ireland." The object of this combination was to bring about the lessening of their hours of labour, to secure themselves a fair remuneration for their labour, to agitate for government interference, and for inspectors to be appointed to enforce the laws enacted for the protection of the men. It made but little progress in the year 1841, but began to develop itself in 1842 and 1843. The Northumberland and Durham miners raised £500 towards what they called a law fund, for the purpose of going to law with their employers to try any general principle in which they considered injustice was done to them. This was the most gigantic union that ever was known at the time, and had for its leaders some of the ablest men, Martin Jude being at its head. He was a calm, clear and honest worker, and did a great deal towards getting measures passed for the better regulations of mines. He had around him some of the ablest men in the colliery districts, such as Mark Dent, Thomas Pratt, James Balantine, George Thompson, George Charlton, Mathew Elliott, Edward Richardson, William Mitchell, Christopher Haswell, Thomas Hay, John Tulip, T. Clough, Robert Archer, Alexander Stoves, William Hammond, and many others. In the year 1843 the owners at Wingate Colliery in the County of Durham, decided on having wire ropes for hauling the cages to bank. To this the men who were foolishly prejudiced, objected, which was

the cause of a long strike. In the same year the men at Thornley Colliery, one of the largest in Durham, came out on strike. Warrants were issued against 68 persons at the instance of the owners of the above colliery for absenting themselves without leave from their employment on the 24th November. Mr. J. E. Marshall, of Durham, appeared on the part of the owners, and Mr. Roberts, the miners' advocate, for the prisoners.

Mr. Marshall in opening the case on the part of the owners, said the men were bound under the ordinary pit bond, and he would read the material clauses bearing on the case. The men, Mr. Marshall said, were under stringent terms, and if they suffered from them they had themselves to blame, since they agreed to pay certain penalties for the infraction of certain rules.

Mr. Roberts applied to the bench to stop the case, urging that as the weighing machine was admitted not to be stamped according to the provisions of the act, the bond was illegal.

Mr. Marshall objected, as the machine had been there previous to the bond.

Mr. Roberts : I should like to have that taken down on the notes of the Court, as I shall most likely apply to the Court of Queen's Bench in the case.

Mr. Heckles, the resident viewer of Thornley Colliery, was then called, and said : I am viewer for the Thornley Coal Company. The partners are, Thomas Wood Rowland Webster, John Gully, and John Burrell. The bond was executed in my presence by Thomas Wood, and it was read over to the workmen. On the 13th November, I received a letter from the workmen, written and signed by James Bagley, as secretary to the workmen. The answer I made was : I wondered why they didn't get some one who could write a letter plainer. I sent word to say that if the letter meant anything, they would have to send a deputation. On the evening of the following day, fifteen men called upon me, and half of them spoke. The overman, according to instruction, deducted 2s. 6d. fine for the day lost. On the evening of the 23rd, a large body of workmen came up and asked why the 2s. 6d. was deducted ? I told them they were asking the road they knew.—(A voice in the Court ; " just like

you.")—I offered, on the Thursday, to let the men work on the pay Saturday to make it up. Some one shouted, " it's not likely we will work for it first, and beg afterwards."

Mr. Roberts objected to this evidence as none of the prisoners were present.

The Chairman said they would take the evidence for what it was worth. (A voice : " that's not much, if we get justice.")

Cross-examined by Mr. Roberts : I know the weighing machine now used. I do not know whether it is stamped as required by Act of Parliament. I have been five years at the colliery. It has not been stamped to my knowledge. The bond has been more accurately enforced since the 20th of November. I could not state the largest amount any one man has been fined in two days. The overman knows better. I don't doubt that one man may have been fined 22s., for two days. I do know that other men have been fined 8s., 7s., 6s., and 5s. a day since that time.

By the Chairman : This is not the ordinary amount of fines. No workman would subject himself so such fines.

Mr. Roberts : But the men have no other chance.

Cross-examination continued : You, Mr. Roberts, did ask for the clearments of the men's wages, I will not give it them now. I did not know that a man, Andrew Hope, had been fined 22s. 6d. I had instructions from the owners at all times to see that the men were fairly treated, and never harshly.—(Sensation in the body of the Court.)

This was the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Roberts then commenced his address for the defence, but was frequently interrupted by the Chairman.

He said it was the duty of an advocate to do whatever he could for the benefit of his clients ; and he thought he ought to be allowed to open his defence. In this case his clients were deprived, of what had been called the " Safeguard of British Liberties "—the trial by jury, and were not tried by their peers, but by those placed above them in the scale of society ; and he was perhaps not doing wrong in asking the bench on that account to extend their merciful consideration to this case. He did not wish to be misunderstood. He did not speak of mercy in the ordinary sense of the term, because he believed the men guiltless—because he believed that their masters and Mr. Heckles ought now to be

in the dock, and those men now in that place ought to be standing as their accusers. But he asked for their merciful consideration, because it was impossible to administer justice fairly and honestly in such a case as this, unless they fully weighed all the circumstances of the case. These men were servants, most of them, unfortunately, hard bound ones. They were men who had much to contend with, who had no doubt much to learn, who had not received all the benefits, or any portion of them, of education; who had perhaps not received that portion of true religious instruction which the kindness of former ages gave the power to the clergy to administer, but which, he regretted to say, had not lately been extended to the poor as it ought to have been. Let the magistrates consider this—let them look to the advantages which attend the former, when the rich man was on one side and the poor man on the other, and he asked them to bring their most merciful consideration to the matter. It had been proved in the evidence that a letter had been sent to the masters, and he believed also that another letter not proved had been sent. He did not wish to rely on this except so far as showing what, on his honour, he had found in the coal trade of the counties of Durham and Northumberland, a desire on the part of the men to consult on their grievances with, and to bring them before their masters to be argued, in order that they might be set right if they were in the wrong, and that they might mitigate the pain of a refusal, if refusal were unavoidable. But the men and the masters did not stand on a par. The utmost that the men could do was to summon their masters for wages, where, perhaps, no jurisdiction could be found; but the masters could send the men to prison, however gross the fraud committed against them. It was reserved for this country to have a law to give to the rich man the power of inflicting imprisonment, whilst it did not give the same power to the poor man. He brought this before the bench to call their attention to another matter. The act gave the magistrates power to decide in three ways:—to order the payment of a fine, to break the contract, or send the parties to prison. When the latter course was adopted it was generally in extreme cases where gross ignorance or violence had been used by the servants; they gave only

a milder punishment in other cases, such as the dissolution of the contract. But in every case in which he had appeared, except in one at Gateshead, the prisoners had been committed to gaol. Was it always to be imprisonment —imprisonment—imprisonment, as if the men were all criminals, and the masters all angels? The complaint in this case was against the masters, and in favour of the men. He said that in this case the masters had proved themselves criminals in the eye of the law, and in fact, that if justice was done them, they would find themselves within the walls of that prison to which they were so eager to send their fellow men. And what was the case brought before them by Mr. Marshall? Why, it appeared that Mr. Heckles had for six months suspected that the weighing machine was wrong. True he suspected it was wrong in favour of the men, and against the masters, but when did they find a viewer suppose anything wrong in favour of the men? Certainly not in Northumberland or Durham. By the wisdom of the law all the benevolence was to be considered as existing on the one hand, and all the fraud on the other. It would be for him to prove, in contradiction to what had been proved on the other side, that the law had been complied with by the men, so far as applying to the inspector went. He should be able to prove to them that application had been made for an inspector, and that the application had been refused. Mr. Heckles said he did not know of the machine being stamped. He should show that it was not stamped, that it was incorrect, and incorrect too against the men; so it was in the case of every machine in the coal trade. Here he might say there was no case at all, because the Act of Parliament referred to stated that no sale should be valid unless it was by the weighing of a machine properly stamped; and forsooth that rule was to be applied to all the petty minutiæ of life; but to the grand thing which supported this country and the world at large—that commodity which was the foundation of our local greatness, and which above all things ought to be protected, was not protected at all by this law. He said if the men were to be sent to prison for refusing to work with a machine, it was proper that they should have that machine perfect. It might be a consideration, whether this case should not be taken before a superior court.

Something had been said about their surveyor, and about there being an exception in favour of lime and other things of a like nature. Now there could be nothing more unlike than lime and coal. Black and white, justice and fraud, truth and falsehood, were just as like each other as coal and lime. If coal had been intended to be exempted by the Act coal would have been mentioned. It was clear that the bond was invalid altogether, for the provisions of the Act of Parliament had not been complied with, and that the owners therefore could not invoke it against their men. The next point on which he relied was, that the wages guaranteed by the bond to the men, had not been paid in the manner stated in the bond ; and though he had heard some very strange decisions, he had yet to hear that service was to be compelled from a man, who had not been paid the wages he had previously earned. He had got from the magistrates at Lanchester, a decision that a man should be paid up for his work to the moment when he was paid. The words of the bond were that the men should be paid " on the usual and accustomed day," but that did not at all do away with the force of his objection, because it was not at all contrary to the acknowledged principle, that he should be paid up to that day when payment was made. He contended that if these men had not been paid on the 24th November for the work done on the 23rd, the masters had no right to insist on their going to work on the following day. It was necessary that the masters should come prepared to prove that every part of the bond had been complied with ; but it appeared from the evidence on the other side, that on this point the bond had not been complied with. It appeared that wages were yet due, and he contended as a matter of law, of reason and of justice, that the master who had not paid the wages of his men according to the strict letter of the law—he did not say he had a right to demand his work, but he did say, that if a man was paid up to the latest moment, and to the utmost farthing, he was not the man to come forward and ask for those men to be sent to prison. These were cases which had been proved by the other side. He should have other cases to prove, in his reply, that this was a cruel and inhuman bond, and that it could not possibly be complied with. Mr. Marshall had said that the law was, that

the men should be bound by their bond. He did not think that Mr. Marshall would say so in his sober senses, for if a man had entered into a bond, which was morally impossible for him to fulfil, which would involve him in utter destitution, he must contend that though, under such a bond a master had a right to come upon him for damages, yet he had no power to call on the magistrates to send the man to prison. Rather than submit to such a bond, the men whom they saw filling the galleries would rather all go to prison. They could not have more solemn evidence of the oppressiveness of the bond than that. Those men could voluntarily declare, so help them God, that they would not go to work till the men sent to prison had been released. The men trusted the agreement would not have been acted on with strictness, till the last week or two, and they said—before they returned to work they must have a new agreement. They would have gone on working, and Mr. Heckles knew that he (Mr. Roberts) had induced them to return to work, because he understood, and had told them, that a beam and scales were set up, but that had not been done, or at least not till yesterday. Why, how many days had elapsed between the 30th November and the 7th December. The magistrates must know that two-thirds, nay, nine-tenths of these cases which came before them, came on the assertions of the men—that they had been defrauded by fraudulent weights or measures—and yet, on so material a point, no redress had been afforded to the men. Thus then, there were three points on which he relied :—That the agreement was unstamped and incorrect ; that the men could not under the bond gain a livelihood ; and that the wages were not paid to the men as guaranteed by the bond at the time when they were called on to answer. Another point on which he relied materially was, that justice had not been done to these men, and if he convinced them that strict justice had not been done to these men, they ought to relieve them. In no other collieries was such strictness laid down. In some there was a fine for four quarts, in some three, and in others for two quarts of foul coal ; but in none but Thornley was there a fine for one quart of splint out of 6 cwt. He had found that the men had no means of testing the accuracy of the quantities of foul coals. They found that a man had been fined

22s. during the time he could only earn 6s., and under circumstances like these, he called upon the magistrates to break the bond and clear the men. On the way in which the law was administered, they knew not to what extent the prosperity of the coal trade depended in the two counties. He would not speak so positively, but that he knew this to be the case. He had endeavoured to set the men right, and by the interposition of his own authority he had induced the men to go to work again. But this passed a joke, and he would not recommend them to go to work under such a bond as that. He certainly had used his efforts to reconcile masters and men—to bring peace where there had been war, yet he could not recommend these men to return to work. He warned the masters that, in the exercise of their authority, they had proceeded too far. Not one of those men would go to work. He would tender them all as witnesses, for the purpose of stating their injuries through the land—for the purpose of showing that the masters exercised their authority in a mischievous manner ; and he called upon them to discharge the bond if he showed, as he was prepared to do, that it was impossible for an honest man to work under it. He then called—

John Cockson, who said : I don't think a man can get a living if the bond is to be carried out in its strictness. If a quart of splint is to be fined for, I am sure a man cannot get a living. I will go to gaol before I will go to work under such a bond.

Matthew Dawson : It is not so easy to obtain a living now as it was three months ago, as the bond has never been put in force till now. I recollect 22s. being laid out for one man : there were other tubs came up with as much in as his ; more might have been laid out.

Thomas Dermot Moran : I cannot earn a living if the bond is carried out. I will rather go to gaol than work under the bond. I was fined 27s. the last fortnight I was paid.

John James Bird : I doubt very much that an average man can make a living under the bond. The steelyards have been a complaint for the last ten months, the keeping off of 2s. 6d. was not the cause of the men striking. One of the causes for the men not going to work was, that the scales

were not put up. I will rather go to prison than work under the bond.

William Wearmouth : The bond had not been enforced before for a quart of stones, and if enforced, an honest man cannot obtain a living. I will rather stop in gaol for ever than work under this bond.

George Nesbit : I don't think it possible for an average man to send up one tub without a quart of stone. It is the feeling of the men generally that they will rather go to prison than work for nothing.

The chairman inquired if Mr. Roberts had any evidence of a different complexion to bring forward ?

Mr. Roberts said he could not make out his case fully without bringing forward the evidence of every hewer who could not make a living. He should be happy to have an intimation from the bench that he had already sufficiently proved the case ; for, as it was a matter of opinion, he thought he ought to make his case as strong as he could. There were between 300 and 400 hewers, and he proposed to call every one of them, in order, by the accumulation of evidence to show the real state of the case.

After some further discussion the case was adjourned till next day at ten o'clock, Friday, December 8th, to see if any agreement could be made between the masters and men. And on the court sitting the next day the chairman inquired if any arrangements had been come to during the night.

Mr. Roberts replied that none had been come to, and then proceeded to call the following witnesses :

William Henderson was of opinion no man can make a living if the bond be enforced, he would rather go to prison than work again under that bond (" all will, all,' resounded through the court).

John Stephenson said : No man can earn a living under the bond. The black brass and splint comes down amongst the coal. In some places the men work by the light of the Davy lamp, it is impossible to separate the black brass from the coal. I have been a hewer for 20 years, and will rather go to gaol till the 5th April, though I have a wife and five children.

Joseph Longstaff : No man can earn a living if the bond is enforced.

Newrick Walton: I was one of the deputation that went to the inspector of weights at Easington to get him to come and examine the steelyards. The magistrates refused to grant an order for the inspector to come. Will rather go the prison than work under the bond.

John James Bird: Applied by the advice of Mr. Roberts for a summons against the master for ill-treatment. He said he wanted a summons for the nonpayment of three shillings, wage. Mr. Barry, a magistrate, said "What! for the small sum of three shillings?" Answered, "three shillings is not a small sum for him." Mr. Barry would not grant a summons. Mr. Barry is on the bench now, will swear that he applied for a summons and was refused.

John Creswell: No man can get a living if the bond is enforced. It is better to go to prison than to work all the fortnight for nothing, and to be counted dishonest men, when we cannot pay our way.

William Wilkinson: Didn't know what we were fined for till we got boxes. We were fined at random, sometimes 1s., thought it a deal; would go to prison before work again; believes the other men speak the truth; he mixes with the men a good deal; was fined 54 quarts with his marrow last Wednesday. Mr. Heckles asked him (witness) how he could presume to receive the sacrament.

Mr. Roberts, exclaimed, pointing at Mr. Heckles, "Good God! does *he* presume to take the sacrament I wonder?"

William Turner: Had complained about the scales, has applied to Mr. Heckles three times about old steelyards, and has been promised a beam and scales when he (Mr. H,) had time, but he had something of more importance to attend to. No man can get a living as things are, will go to prison first.

The bench then adjourned till Wednesday; and on re-assembling on Wednesday, the Court was filled in every part immediately after opening the doors. Mr. Roberts continued to give evidence:—

William Anderson was called, and said: It is impossible to send up a tub without a quart of foul, I cannot get a living if the bond is enforced. There are noxious gases in some places, in others not. Fined 2s. 6d. if he went too high. The lamp was at some distance, and had a bad light;

could not see sufficiently well to separate black brass from coal. Had been bound to receive 26s. a fortnight; had received for one fortnight, 3s. 7d.; another, 17s. 6d.; another, 27s.; had got 26s. a fortnight about six times. Was to have a comfortable dwelling-house provided, had been sent in with another family, who had one small room. Have worked at other collieries; never found any so strict as this, men were afraid to go to Mr. Heckles. Wouldn't like to go to prison, but would sooner go than work under the bond.—(A loud huzzaing here took place by the miners, which was repressed by the Chairman.)

William Ord, William Kay, John Bates, William Toplis, Augustus King, Robert Toplis, Robert Walton, Reuben Forster, Charles Willet, George Edwards, Henry Willis, Joseph Burnett, William Parkes, Joseph Kirk, Edward Clarke, Joseph Walker, Robert Parker, and Robert Richardson, all gave similar evidence, choosing rather to go to gaol than work under the bond.

Andrew Hope was next called: The bond was not read when he was bound; is the son of the poor man in gaol; was fined on the three days. Only received 7d. for his work on those days. Had 90 quarts laid out, although worked fairly and honestly.

Jabez Wonders: The bond was read when he signed it. Works in five-quarter seam, was fined 12s. for three days' work, and stood 3s. in debt. He threw down 5s. and told the overman to take pay, he refused. He had no copy of the bond; did not know he should be fined for each quart; will go to gaol rather than submit.—("We'll all gan," resounded throughout the Court.)—Mr. Heckles had asked him where he could go to better himself?

Mr. Roberts, now begged to tender his own evidence, and after some little hesitation on the part of the bench, he was sworn, and read slowly from a paper as follows:—I am the attorney employed by the miners of the two counties Northumberland and Durham, to defend their interests before magistrates, and to act as their general legal adviser. In that capacity during the last two months, I have been several times called upon to advise with the men of Thornley Colliery. They have complained to me about the steelyards. I directed them to apply to the viewer on the

subject, and also to go to the inspector of weights for his advice. I was afterwards informed this was done without any good result. I recommended the men still to continue to work. On the 19th November, I heard the men were unsettled, in consequence of the steelyards not being adjusted, and other grievances. I drove over to Thornley and saw several men the same night. I held a meeting of the men at six o'clock the following morning, and succeeded in persuading them to return to work, provided I could obtain any redress of their grievances. We all went to the house of Mr. Heckles the viewer. He came out and I addressed him in the presence of the men. I told him the men complained of the weighing machine, that it was unjust, and earnestly requested him to erect a beam and scales. He said he would, but could not do it immediately as he had other things to do. I pressed the point upon him, and he then agreed to erect it directly. I then spoke of the "laid outs," these the men had complained of, and I asked him to be more lenient. I read from a paper furnished me by the men. He replied "No, he should enforce the bond." I remonstrated against this—that it was impossible for a man to earn a living under the bond. He answered, "he did not care about that, he should do it." I then walked away, and returned immediately, and asked him—as he meant to enforce the bond, and the men could not live under it—to give the men their clearance. This, he refused; after this I left him. This is my case, and I demand an honourable acquittal for these men.

Mr. Marshall then proceeded to reply, and said he should not feel it necessary to engage the attention of the Court for any length of time. He would address himself to the points of defence as briefly as possible. The first question was: had these men committed a breach of the law, or had they not? The men had bound themselves by a bond to serve the Thornley Coal Company for 12 months. The bond declares the men shall not absent themselves from their work. These men did so. It would be a question, whether, under any circumstances of oppression on the part of their masters they would be justified in leaving their employment. He contended they would not. But here it was quite clear the men had no such wrong to complain of as would excuse them for

committing any such breach of the law as this. His wish was to conciliate the parties, and not to say anything but what was required at his hands on the part of the owners of the Thornley Colliery. The magistrates retired, and on returning into Court, the Chairman said the delay in giving judgment was not because there was any doubt on the minds of the magistrates as to the course they should pursue, for they were unanimously of opinion that the law had been broken, and the defendants must stand convicted.—(The prisoners here said they would rather go to gaol.)—It was, therefore, his (the Chairman's) painful duty to pronounce the prisoners severally guilty ; and the sentence of the Court was that they should be imprisoned in the House of Correction for six weeks, to reckon from this day.

Immediately after the trial Mr. Roberts obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, and the men who were in prison were removed to the Court of Queen's Bench, where, upon an informality, they were acquitted.

We have dwelt at some length on this great trial with the Thornley men, as it points out with great clearness the position of the miners of the two counties at that period, and affords a fair indication of the petty tyranny which was exercised over them previous to the great strike of 1844.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRELIMINARIES OF THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1844. THE CIRCULAR OF THE UNION TO THE COAL TRADE. LARGE MEETING AT SHADON'S HILL.

The many grievances referred to in the long police court case in last chapter were fast becoming unbearable by the men. It was not only that their wages were reduced, and that they were cheated and defrauded at every turn by unprincipled and dishonest agents, but they were subjected to such an amount of contemptible and petty tyranny, such mean despicable domineering, which was all the more galling and irritating from its very meanness. Matters had been pushed to such an extent that the cry for redress had become almost universal throughout the two counties, and early in

the year 1844, the members of the miners' association drew up the following address and sent it to the coal owners :—

To the Coal Owners of Great Britain and Ireland.

Gentlemen.—We, the members of the Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, do hereby set forth and declare what our objects and intentions are in forming the above association ; and we feel it our duty to do so on account of the many and serious reports got up and set abroad by parties whose own conscience must decide the motive for so doing. Our object in forming the above association is to better our condition, and we beg to apprize you that we would rather by far that could be done by an amicable adjustment of all differences, than by having recourse to a strike, which we feel inclined to believe is equally disadvantageous to you as to us, and the inevitable result of which would be to engender feelings of such a kind as ought not to exist between master and servant. We intend to lay before you the following specific and simple plan, viz., that each colliery owner shall be furnished with a copy of such prices as shall be thought necessary and reasonable, and in which it is intended to go on the principle of making the cost price, as far as labour is concerned, equally or nearly so on every colliery in the trade, and to such uniformity of cost price the masters to add what they deem a proper and reasonable return for their capital. It being our firm and decided opinion that, as we risk ourselves and you your money to dig from the bowels of the earth a commodity on which it may truly be said the existence of Great Britain as a nation depends, it is not too much to request that the price of that article shall be such as to give ample remuneration to both the labour and capital employed. Something of this kind must be done. We have had to submit this year to a very great reduction in prices, and this we opine, if you as coal owners get once into the path of ruinous competition by underselling each other in the market and then endeavouring to reduce the wages to still keep a market, is a process which is alike ruinous to both parties, and which must have a tendency to keep up a contentious war of strikes and stagnation—labour and capital contending for the mastery ; while the public, who are consumers, reap the benefit, without so much as soiling a finger in the dangerous undertaking of raising an article indispensably necessary to their comfort and existence. The moral and physical consequences of a contentious warfare between capital and labour, appear to us to be fully illustrated by the fable of two noble animals combating or fighting for a piece of prey, and while the combat was going on, another animal of dimunitive size and strength, came and carried off the prize ; while neither of the two, such was their state of exhaustion, could prevent him. To conclude, we entreat you to bestow on this, our earnest and sincere requisition, your careful and best consideration, and if you should be pleased to agree with us as respects the principle on which it is founded, it will be alike creditable to your judgment and interest.

We remain, yours, &c.,

The Members of the Miners' Association.

This address though written in a mild respectful and conciliatory spirit, and though coming from the representatives of thousands of men, met with nothing but silent contempt, for no notice, official or otherwise, was taken of it by the gentlemen to whom it was addressed.

On March the 2nd, 1844, a great meeting was therefore held at Shadon's Hill, between Wreckenton and Birtley, a place which since that time has become famous as the trysting place of the miners. The meeting was attended by the pitmen of the two counties, there being at least 20,000 men present. The men from the collieries on the Tyne began to arrive at about 8 o'clock in the morning in Newcastle, leaving the latter place for Shadon's Hill at ten o'clock ; whilst the men of the Tees and Wear were seen wending their way to the Hill towards 12 o'clock. Great numbers of the men had walked from twenty to thirty miles to be present, and as the weather had been very bad during the week, much snow having fallen, a convincing proof was thus offered of the great interest these brave fellows took in their union, and of their determination to support it. Mr. Mark Dent was called to the chair, and the following resolutions were moved and seconded by the undernamed gentlemen, who supported them in excellent addresses : Messrs. C. Haswell, Thomas Pratt, E. Richardson, W. Mitchell, G. Charlton, and W. Hammond. Mr. Roberts, the miners' attorney general, also addressed the meeting. The 1st resolution was as follows :—" That, considering the vast amouut of good that has already been effected by our union, this meeting pledges itself to stand by and support the same, come weal, come woe." The 2nd resolution was :—" That we consider restriction of our labour the best method that can be adopted to secure our rights ; consequently this meeting resolves to carry out the resolution on that subject ; " whilst the third was :—" That this meeting agrees not to bind into any agreement with the masters, until after the Glasgow conference, which meets on Monday, March 25th."

Mr. Mitchell proposed, and Mr. Martin Jude seconded the proposition, that the following petition be forwarded to the House of Commons, which, like the other resolutions, was carried :—

"*To the Honourable the Knights and Burgesses of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled*—The petition of the coal and other miners of the counties of Northumberland and Durham, in public meeting assembled, humbly sheweth :—

"That your petitioners, miners of the coal and other mines of Great Britain and Ireland, have, by sad and manifold experience, been subject to frequent disastrous explosions of inflammable gas whilst following their respective employments, which have been invariably attended with great sacrifice of human life, and consequently entailing a serious and extensive amount of privation and misery. We, therefore, humbly pray that your honourable house would be pleased to enact and direct that the plan or method of James Ryan, Esq., be taken into consideration, and investigated with a view to its application as a remedial measure, it having been demonstrated, beyond all controversy, to be worthy of such investigation.

"That your Honourable House would be pleased to enact and appoint inspectors of mines (as of factories) to see to the safety of ropes and other machinery connected with the danger of life and property, also to inspect the ventilation at proper periods, so as to prevent the recurrence of explosion, partial or extensive.

"That your Honourable House would enact and make provision for the prevention of the application of wire ropes for the purpose of miners descending or ascending on the same, they being by their nature and texture subject to deterioration from extreme heat and extreme cold, and consequently rendered unsafe by this liability to damage.

"That your Honourable House would cause to be enacted a law compelling proper weighing machines, on the beam and scale principle, so that your petitioners may have the produce of their labour accurately weighed, and such weighing machines to be under the surveillance of the proper authorities, and subject to be tested and adjusted by them, without notice, at all seasonable times, with a power to remove and condemn the same if found defective.

"That your Honourable House would enact and pass into law, that the wages earned by your petitioners be paid weekly and up to the last work performed, with the excep-

tion of one day allowed for the making up the accounts thereof.

" And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray."

After adopting these resolutions the men returned to their homes, quietly to await the result of the conference in Glasgow before taking any further action, and each and all resolving to be guided by the leaders of the union in all they did.

CHAPTER X.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT GLASGOW. THE NATURE OF THE MEN'S GRIEVANCES. A SECOND CIRCULAR FROM THE UNION TO THE COAL TRADE.

On the 25th of March, 1844, the National Conference of the Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland was held in the Mechanics' Hall, Trongate Street, Glasgow, when upwards of 70,000 miners were represented ; Messrs. Christopher Haswell, Mark Dent, Martin Jude, Thomas Weatherley, Mr. Tulip, Edward Richardson, Benjamin Embleton, and others, representing the Counties of Northumberland and Durham.

Amongst the many important resolutions discussed at this conference was that as to whether there should be a general strike in Northumberland and Durham or not. Mr. C. Haswell moved there should be a strike, as it was the opinion of his constituents that if they did not resist the shameful bonds and unjust proposals of their masters they would never have the least opportunity of benefiting their condition ; and that they had been insulted and oppressed until they could bear it no longer.

Mr. Ben. Embleton said he knew as much of the miners of Northumberland and Durham as any man, and he fully believed if they would allow them to fight their own battle, and keep their men from filling their places, they would come off victorious.

A delegate from Ashton-under-Lyne said if they agreed to have a strike at the present time, they might make up their minds to attend the funeral of the association.

Martin Jude thought that not one half of the means had been used, as regarded Northumberland and Durham, to

prevent a strike, and that many things could yet be adopted, and many plans tried.

After a long discussion for and against, the report was ordered to be brought up, when it appeared that the numbers were—

Against a general strike	28,042
For	23,357
Majority against	4,685

Mr. Haswell then moved that a committee of the whole conference should be formed for the purpose of devising the best means to assist the men in Northumberland and Durham in their peculiar position, which was carried unanimously ; and, after a long discussion, the following motion was passed :—" It is the decision of this committee that the men of Northumberland and Durham ought, after using every other lawful means, and not yet gaining their end, to be allowed to refuse to work under the masters' agreement, which is to take place on the 5th day of April next ; and we, the delegates from the different parts of the kingdom, do hereby pledge ourselves to do all in our power to assist them in their struggle, and also to prevent men from coming in amongst them ; and, if possible, still further to restrict our labour."

From the ample correspondence which took place at this time with a view to lay the grievances of the miners before the public, the following may be taken, as it will fully explain, and perhaps justify the miners in the course they took in subsequently coming out on strike.

West Holywell Colliery.—" We work the tubs at 4½d. per tub, and when the tubs are laid out, we are fined 6d., and paid nothing for hewing the coals. They fine us for sending small coals to bank, at the same time they are selling them for 6s. per chaldron.

Elemore Colliery.—" The rule at this colliery is to pay fortnightly every Friday. Last pay-day they would not pay us on the Friday, but they said they would pay us next morning. We went for our money at 7 o'clock in the morning and we were kept waiting till 5 o'clock in the afternoon, while they knew our wives had a great way to go to buy a bit of meat. The viewer at this colliery was not very long

ago a coal hewer. He appears to have forgot himself. Oh God ! how long are the miners to suffer this oppression ? "

JARROW COLLIERY.—" A deputation waited upon the viewer to show that the tubs were 2½ pecks more than had been paid for. He kept them standing three hours at the back door on a cold morning, his carriage came to the front door, he got in, and left the men standing. Such robbery, and contempt from the parties who are the cause of it, can surely not last long."

TYNE MAIN COLLIERY.—" The laid out is something fearful here. A man sent nine corves to bank, eight of them were laid out because they were not chalked. He is a hewer in a place two yards wide. One part of the place was bright coal, and the other, rusty. When the overman came into the place, he asked him what he was to do, he said he really did not know, but he might do so and so, ' but do not say that I told.' Now, what is the man to do, when the masters do not know. When the coals were rusty the man was to chalk them ; when bright, he had not to do so. This man worked for 1s. 6d., and there was 2s. kept off him ; so that he laboured all day for nothing, and had to pay the masters 6d. for allowing him to do so. Kind Heaven look down upon us, and guide us the way to get clear of this oppression, for the miner's cup is about full. No human being can bear the treatment which is daily inflicted upon us ! "

As the annual bindings of the miners of the two counties were drawing to a close, the following circular was addressed to the coal owners :—

TO THE COAL OWNERS OF DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND.

GENTLEMEN.—We, the miners of the said counties, beg respectfully to apprise you that the time is now at hand when we as workmen, and you as masters, must enter into an agreement for the purpose of carrying on the respective works, &c., and as during the present engagement, prices have been extremely low, we desire that you will give us your attention.

GENTLEMEN, we have officially requested to be met by a deputation from your agents the viewers, which request remains as yet unattended to, we therefore deem it our imperative duty to solicit you to appoint a deputation from your own body, to meet a deputation from the Miners' Association, in order to arrange matters, so as to prevent that last of all resources—a strike.

By order of the Delegate Meeting,

Durham, March 20th, 1844. MARK DENT, CHAIRMAN.

Continuing their contemptuous conduct, and treating a large representative body as their agents treated individuals at the various collieries, the gentlemen of the coal trade took no more notice of this second circular than they had done of the first. The men felt insulted by this contempt, and, goaded by the insolence of their employers, they resolved that the men in the two counties should cease working until their differences were adjusted.

CHAPTER XI.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1844. GREAT MEETING ON SHADON'S HILL.

On the fifth day of April, 1844, the miners of Northumberland and Durham terminated the contract between themselves and their employers which they had entered into for the years 1843—4, and, as had been previously arranged the men working at the whole of the collieries in the two counties unanimously refused to enter into any fresh contract till the matters in which they felt themselves aggrieved, should have been considered. This the masters refused to do, and haughtily refused to treat with any one who "presumed" to utter a complaint. The consequence was a general strike, which had the effect of laying every pit in Durham and Northumberland idle. The first general meeting, after the men came out on strike, was held on Shadon's Hill, when many thousand miners were present and took part in the proceedings. On reaching the ground there was presented one of the most splendid and magnificent sights ever witnessed. The music of various bands was heard, and flags and banners were flying in every direction. The part of the Fell where the meeting was held was of the shape of an amphitheatre, at the bottom of which was placed a waggon, which served for a platform, from which as far as the eye could reach, was observed a mass of human beings, there being upon a fair calculation 35,000 to 40,000 men present. There were no sports nor anything to attract their attention from the meeting, and the whole mass seemed in earnest sympathy with the object that had brought them together.

The chairman, Mr. Mark Dent, opened the proceedings by speaking as follows :—Fellow men, we have long been divided, but I hope this day is the uniting of the miners of the Tees, Wear and Tyne for the purpose of having our grievances adjusted, for they are manifold and severe. We have long sought for redress, we have been treated with scorn, but now we are resolved to be free. We are an insulted, oppressed, and degraded body of men. If the masters had made anything like reasonable proposals we would have accepted them ; but they have brought forward a miserable proposition, an infamous bond, under which many men have been working for a mere pretence ; but we will do so no longer. We will stand together till we obtain our rights. We are determined to be free, and I hope that the time is not far distant when we will not have to use such means as we have had to resort to on the present occasion ; but that the time of reasoning between master and man will take the place of strikes, and the working man will get a fair days' wage for a fair day's work. Miners as a class are not looked on with respect by the public, and the great majority of the press seems to be against us. Our employers use every means to oppress us, and this is not to be wondered at, for we have had no respect for ourselves. But now that there is an understanding amongst us, are we any longer to continue to drag the chains of slavery, to bear the yokes of bondage and toil in the bowels of the earth, as we have done ?

He then introduced Mr. George Charlton to move the first resolution, who, in doing so, said : The miners of Great Britain had been insulted and ill-treated ; many persons looked with scorn and contempt upon them because they were not aware of the oppression and injustice inflicted upon them by their cruel task-masters ; while the miners who felt that oppression and injustice, who were daily robbed of their wages, knew, and most acutely felt the degradation and wrongs which they had too long submitted to, and which they would endure no longer. Had not fell tyranny caused thousands of their fellow-workmen to be hurried from life into eternity—to die of premature old age. And had not thousands more been victimized, worn down by unrequited toil and excessive oppression. He trusted they would shortly bid farewell to tyranny—yes, to tyranny of every

kind. What had caused them to leave their homes and families? "'Twas oppression." What a multitude stood before him! every one of whom had sworn to be free. He sat down by moving the following resolution:—"That it being the lawful and inherent right of every working man in the kingdom to obtain the best possible price for his labour, this meeting avows its intention and determination to procure, individually and collectively, a better remuneration for their labour than has heretofore been paid, and to abstain from working until such remuneration be obtained"

Mr. Robert Archer seconded the resolution, saying that they had now stepped into liberty. They had long been shackled and chained, and had acted against, instead of for each other. Why? Because they had not been united; but though they had borne their chains long and patiently, the time had now come when they would proclaim before oppressing man and high Heaven that henceforward they must, and would be free. Their labour was both dangerous and hard, and the reason of its hardness was, they were paid so little for it. They did not so much care for the laborious nature of their calling, but they did want adequate remuneration to cheer and sweeten their dreary toil. From the nature of their employment and industry they deserved it, and, by the help of God, they were determined to obtain it. The miners had been oppressed until they could stand it no longer, and now they were determined to throw off the shackles of slavery, and assert their freedom. They had no ill-will against, nor did they wish to injure the coal-owners; all they wished was to be paid for their labour, and that was just and right.

The chairman then put the resolution to the meeting, which was carried with acclamation.

Mr. John Tulip came forward to move the next resolution. He said the masters thought to have caught many "blacklegs," but they were mistaken. They expected the Dalton men would have continued at work, but they were disappointed, for he had the proud satisfaction of informing that meeting that the Dalton men were all on the Fell that day.—(The whole mass of the miners rose to their feet and gave long and tremendous cheering.)—After which, Mr. Tulip continued to say: The miners wanted nothing but

what was just and right, and nothing but what was lawful and constitutional. They wanted their rights, and their rights they were determined to have. He then read the resolution, which was as follows :—" That this meeting is of opinion that the bonds proposed by the masters are of such a nature as to be highly injurious to our welfare, consequently we pledge ourselves, individually and collectively, not to bind to them so long as they continue in their present shape." This resolution, after having been seconded, was put to the meeting by the chairman and carried with unanimity, and by acclamation.

Mr. Edward Richardson moved the next resolution, as follows :—" That it is the opinion of this meeting that the bond drawn up by W. P. Roberts, Esq., and approved of by the Durham Delegate Meeting, is reasonable and just, and we pledge ourselves to stand by the same until all its conditions and stipulations are complied with." He was glad to see such unanimity amongst them—all determined to obtain their rights, but only by lawful means. They only wanted to be paid for their labour, so that they could support their families, and educate their children. They wanted nothing more, nothing unreasonable ; they could obtain all they wanted by standing together in unity of purpose, and by keeping the peace.

Mr. Thomas Pratt seconded the resolution. He defended the clause in the men's bond, which stated that drivers and trappers should only work ten hours per day. Was not ten hours, he asked, long enough for young boys to be entombed in the bowels of the earth ? He then spoke against fly-doors, and contended that such doors were highly dangerous, and that they placed the lives and health of the miners in jeopardy. The reason such doors were used was in order to save the masters a few paltry shillings. He would ask the meeting if 1s. per day of ten hours, was too much wages for these boys to receive. Did they ever hear of clout doors ? He could assure them they had some of these elegant doors at Castle Eden, doors made of canvas daubed over with tar. He came in contact with one of these, one morning, when he was going to work, and for the life of him he could not make out what it was. He then referred to the injustice of great tubs ; since their introduction great injustice had been

practised on the men. They were a dangerous and a great evil besides, by preventing a free current of air ; they were inimical to the miner's health, and they consequently ought to be removed. He then reviewed the introduction of Shetland ponies into the pits, and showed the danger to which he and others were subject through their use. He stated a case in order to show that the masters set more value on one of these ponies, than he did on the life of the miners. A miner was killed by one of these large tubs, and the jury returned a verdict of accidental death. Well, one of these ponies turned restive, was always wild, ran away, and was killed, and the lad was fined £10 ; whilst another lad was fined £5 because he had the misfortune to drive a horse which had killed himself. It was a shame, a lasting disgrace to a christian country. From this they would perceive a pony was of more value than a poor collier. He would heartily second the resolution.

It was then put to the meeting and all but unanimously carried, one solitary hand only out of the immense mass being held up against it.

Mr. Joseph Beeston moved the fourth resolution. He said that hitherto they had had nothing to do with the drawing up of the bonds, their feelings or interests were not consulted in the matter, they were drawn up by the masters, and such was the nature of the infamous system, that they were compelled to sign or agree to them, even when they knew they contained clauses, which were prejudicial to their rights and interests. Let them only stand firm and unite together, and they would pull oppression from its throne, level it with the dust, and bury it in eternal oblivion. He then moved this resolution :—" That the coal owners of this district having refused to meet the deputation of the workmen to arrange the differences at present existing between the miners and the coal owners, this meeting announces that such a deputation is still willing to wait on them, in order to settle matters, so as to prevent any continued cessation of labour, providing the said coal owners, avow their intention to meet them for such purpose."

Mr. William Daniels, editor of the *Miners' Advocate,* seconded the resolution, and advised them strongly, above all things, to keep the peace and use no violence, as it would

give them great moral power, and would be to them a shield of defence.

Mr. Richardson said Mr. Joseph Pease, the mild quaker, the liberal politician—he who told the old women of Barnard Castle that he would obtain cheap sugar and tea for them, and would "watch the tap"—and who, when he got into Parliament, voted twenty millions of money as compensation to the slave-holders—this friend wanted the waggoners, masons, and joiners, to go down and hew coal for him, but Joseph was deceived. These men would not go down, and they had all joined the union.—(Great cheering.)

The Chairman said it had been said, if they fell this time they would fall for ever. He did not believe that doctrine. He trusted they were made of better mettle than that! There was every prospect of success, but if they were defeated this time, they would rally again.—(Applause.) Yes, if they lost this battle, they would fight them again. They would stand to their union—and still they would return to the combat! Oh! let them never despair in a good cause, let them never despond, for right would yet overcome might if they stood true to each other. They had been told that the public and the press thought very little of them. All their employers thought about was getting as much work done for as little pay as possible, and when they were not able to go any further, to turn them out of doors. If they had come on to the field of battle, let them fight nobly, and the day would be theirs. If they were ignorant, what was the cause? Had those who had profited out of their labours done anything towards their education? Let them look back into the history of the miners, and even at that present day, and say what school accommodation was there provided for the workmen's children? If a man be ever so steady and wishful to provide for himself and family all the comforts his income would allow, he had not the privilege, like other mechanics in towns, to provide comfortable apartments. The owners sank a colliery, and built houses for their workmen to live in; but they were not houses, and many of them were mere hovels. clustered together. Those who had children were housed on the same principle as those who had none. Some had had

as far as from seven to eight children grown up to men and women, all living in one house, the whole room only being four yards by five, with a small pantry to keep their provisions in. This was the miner's castle, sitting-room, bedroom, and parlour his family brought up to men and women all in this small space. It was a disgrace to the employers, and a credit to the miners, that even with all those difficulties, their morals were not more degraded than they were at the present time. If there was one who dared attempt to speak on unions, it had been their custom to hunt him down till the poor fellow was fairly cowed, and had to submit. In all ages tyranny could only exist so long, and it was so in this case. The good time was coming. The coal owners had introduced a monthly bond to strengthen their position, for they thought by this monthly bond to get clear of any one who took a part in the union. In conclusion, he hoped the miners would not break the peace, but that they would stand faithfully to their union, and he had no fear but they would come off victorious.

After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and three cheers for the union, the immense assemblage separated in a most peaceable manner.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUANCE OF THE STRIKE. THE ACTIONS OF THE MASTERS AND MEN. GREAT MEETING ON BEHALF OF THE MEN IN NEWCASTLE.

The strike was entered upon with great unanimity by the men, and with great determination to fight it out to the very last. The employers, seeing the men thus determined, drew all the horses out of the pits with the object of quietly awaiting the issue of the contest, and of starving them into compliance. The men at the various collieries formed themselves into committees to raise funds, and delegate meetings were held very often, reporting to each other how the men were standing out, and as to the prospects, if any, of a recommencement of work. The men seemed to have made up their minds " to conquer, or die " in the struggle, and they were supported in this resolution by their wives, who were equally as determined. At almost every general and district

meeting resolutions were passed such as—" We pledge ourselves, individually and collectively, that we will keep the peace, and should any man or men act otherwise, he or they are not friends but traitors to the cause, and as such we would treat them." The leaders of this strike manifested great anxiety, from the very outset, to conduct the contest in peace and good order, and with a view to carrying out this plan, they lost no opportunity of bringing the importance of proper conduct before the men whenever they were assembled together in anything like numbers. With them it had to be a fair stand-up battle between Might and Right, and they wanted no desperate or violent conduct on the part of the men as auxiliaries in the struggle ; feeling sure that by the one course they would gain—what was very important for their success—public sympathy, and by the other they would fail to gain it, and disgust those who might otherwise be friendly disposed towards them.

A public meeting was held at Wallsend on April the 10th, and the day being very fine there was a large assemblage The meeting was addressed by John Dobinson, E. Hall, Robert Jobling, Wm. Bell, Geo. Hunter, Wm. Jobling, Wm. Bell, William Beesley, Joseph Fawcett, Charles Parkinson, and William Woodworth. On the 15th of the same month, another public meeting was held at Fawdon, when a resolution to the following effect was moved by John Bolam :—" That it is the opinion of this meeting that the miners are fully justified in refusing to work under the coal owners' new bonds." Mr. Henry Young seconded this resolution, and it was supported by William Thompson, James Hay, William Lumsden, and William Sharp. On May 2nd, a public meeting of tradesmen and others was held on Ballast Hills, Newcastle, addressed by William Booth, George Hunter, and Mr. William Daniels, when the following resolution was proposed, seconded, and carried :—" That it is the opinion of this meeting, from the statements made, that the miners of Northumberland and Durham are an ill-used and oppressed class of men, and deserve the sympathy and support of all classes of the community, and this meeting pledges itself to use its utmost exertions to procure support for them during their present struggle." It was by means of such meetings that the miners succeeded in obtaining a little

relief by which they were enabled to keep the wolf from the door, and to prevent their wives and children absolutely starving. The necessity was felt of educating public opinion properly as to the real nature of their grievances, and for this purpose a great and important meeting was held on the 7th of May, in the Lecture Room, Newcastle. This meeting was called by printed placards, which stated that it was for the purpose of examining into the condition, and protecting the interests of the miners of Northumberland and Durham. The spacious hall, the largest then in the town of Newcastle, was crowded in every part. Many respectable persons were present, among whom were a number of coal owners and viewers, and several members of the Coal Trade Committee.

Mr. Mark Dent was voted to the chair, and opened the meeting by stating the objects for which it had been called. He said they had been called together to consider the manifold grievances of the miners of Northumberland and Durham, and though the miners were said to be an ignorant class of men, still they had moral courage enough to bring their wrongs before the public ; and he thought, ignorant as they were, they should be able to convince that immense meeting that they were greatly oppressed. They might not possess that intelligence and talent which some could boast of, but they would endeavour to make themselves understood. They would do their best, and nobody could do more. He was sorry to say that the public press, he meant a great portion of them, had greatly misrepresented their objects, and had striven to make the public believe that their grievances were more imaginary than real. He was sure, however, that he would make them so clear and palpable that night, that they would not fail to convince the intelligent inhabitants of Newcastle that they were an ill-used class of men. He knew it had been asked, " Why did you form your present Union ? " His answer was, " it was the iron arm of oppression that caused us to unite ; besides, the masters set us the example, for the masters formed a union for the protection of their interests, and the miners have an equal right to form one to mend their condition." The miners knew by bitter experience that the masters' union had seriously injured the men, for, by thus combining they drew up,

cruel, stringent bonds, and were enabled by these means for the last three years to effect a material reduction in their wages, and consequently their comforts were much abridged. The reason why they had not opposed these shameful bonds before was, because they had not the power. They were disunited, and could not oppose them ; but it was not the love they had for them that prevented them from opposing them. It was want of union ; every man was then striving for himself, regardless of his neighbour ; and if a man singly attempted to oppose the bonds, he was sure to be turned out to the wide world with his wife and family. In fact, he would be sacrificed, looked upon as a dangerous character, and no one would employ him ; but now, thank God, their eyes were opened, they were firmly united, and were determined to be free. Some persons had asserted that they had no right to form an association in the present condition of society. He denied this doctrine. It was perfectly lawful to unite, it was their interest to unite, and if they had not united, they would, ere long, have been the veriest slaves that ever breathed. When they formed the Miners' Association the interest of every man was consulted, the good of all was blended together, so that they could not, if they were true to each other, ever be broken up. When one thousand men were convinced that they were oppressed, and united to remove that oppression, ten thousand would soon respond to them, thus showing that when one class of men were injured all were injured. At the same time he hoped the miners present would abstain from cheering, and let the meeting decide for itself. He likewise expected they would allow every speaker a fair hearing. He then introduced—

Mr. Clough, a miner of Thornley, who said they came thus openly before the public in order, if possible, to secure their sympathy and support. As to their present position, they had done all they could to prevent a cessation from labour. They wished to meet the masters to conciliate matters, but they had thought proper to refuse to meet them. He would repeat, the men had used every endeavour to prevent the strike, and whatever might be the result, the men would not be to blame. The truth was the miners were compelled to strike, for by the stipulations of the masters they could not obtain a living. They wished to pay

their way as honest men ought to do, but they found they were unable to do this. He knew it was the duty of workmen to pay the tradesmen, or they would become bankrupts. The miners could not do this with their late wages, hence their present position. The statement of the Coal Owners' Committee, that the miners could earn 3s. 8d. per day, was a delusion ; for the best hewers, in eight hours in the most favourable seams, could not earn more than 2s. 6d. or 2s. 10d. per day, and it should be remembered that they were not employed every day like most trades. Indeed, it could be proved that during the last year the average earnings of the miners of Northumberland and Durham, after taking off deductions for fines, doctor, coals, picks, &c., were not more than 11s. per week. Was this sufficient wages for a miner to receive ? It was said that the masters could not afford to give them reasonable wages, on account of the depression of the coal trade. He denied this—they could well afford it. Why, there was only 6d. per ton difference between the price of coals in the London market this year and the year 1831. The only advance they asked was 1½d. per ton ; surely they could afford this trifle, which would be a great consideration to them. The bonds were always, before this year, drawn up by the masters without consulting the men, but as they were one of the contracting parties they were determined in future to have a voice in the matter. He then referred to the ventilation of mines, and said the ventilation was bad and improper. He had experienced its injurious effects upon himself. He had been compelled. or else be fined 2s. 6d. to work in a part of the mine strongly charged with carbonic gas, and he had not been working more than half-an-hour before his head was like to split ; and, ultimately, he was carried out insensible, and lay in his bed three days. He believed if 10s. had been expended on ventilation in that place, this would not have happened. When he recovered, he was set to work in the same place again—(Sensation.)—the consequence of which was, he was laid off work for 15 weeks, and could not obtain any smart money. He thought it very hard, when he had ruined his health by inhaling the poisonous gas, that he should get no support, when, if a man broke his arm he would obtain it. He had now stated, he hoped, sufficient to them to obtain their sympathy and support.

Mr. John Tulip next addressed the meeting. He said in reference to the strike, that it had been forced upon them by the unjust and shameful reduction which had been made in their earnings in 1843, and the two preceding years. He was sorry to say it had been stated that the pitmen were a lazy worthless set of fellows. It pained him much to hear such vile calumnies, and he strongly denied their truth. They were not lazy, they were not a worthless, improvident class of men ; and from his heart he believed a more industrious, a more laborious, or useful class of men were not in existence. Was it not a fact that they toiled in a dreary mine for ten or twelve hours together—sometimes working on their backs, sometimes on their sides, and sometimes nearly suffocated with foul air, while they were in constant danger of their lives from explosion or falling of roof, and all this for wages that would not keep soul and body together, or scarcely keep life in their wives and children. He would again deny that the miners were a lazy body of men, no men were more willing to labour, but they wished for some recompense for that labour. If they had one fault greater than another it was that they laboured too much. By their great industry, by one man competing with another, and striving how much he could do, they caused the present low rate of wages. Year by year were their wages reduced, and year by year they had worked harder and longer hours in order to make their wages up, but they found this course only added to the evil. They had now got wiser, and they had restricted their labour. This had given great offence to their masters, they were very angry with them for doing this, which plainly showed they were on the right tack. The principal object they had in view when they adopted the restrictive system, was sympathy for their fellowmen. It was to give them who were out of employment leave to toil ; and they had succeeded in thus giving work to hundreds of men whom the owners said they could not employ. By the guarantee clause they were fined 2s. 6d. if they were absent one day ; but the masters often laid the men idle without any compensation at all, and as they were bound to them for a whole year as their servants, it was reasonable they should find them constant employment or wages. Their wages only amounted to 24s., per fortnight,

and out of this they had to find powder, candles, tools, and pay for coals and doctor, which reduced their wages to less than eleven shillings per week. They were subject to unreasonable fines, in the shape of " laid out " and " set out " tubs, by which they often worked for nothing, and were fined too into the bargain. (Sensation.) Let them be paid for all good coals, and they would be satisfied. They had also to contend with fraudulent weighing machines, and if they wanted them adjusted they had formerly to give them three days' notice before it could be done, but that was too glaring. so they changed it into a " reasonable notice." But what did they want any notice for ? Honest men were always ready to make anything right that was wrong. He thought that if the inspectors of weights and measures were to give a reasonable notice to the shopkeepers that they were coming to examine their weights, machines, &c., when they did go, the shopkeeper would take precious good care to be ready for them, and have all things snug. He had no objection to the masters being protected, and unreasonable men checked. The speaker then referred to the Thornlay case, and showed the unjust and exorbitant fines inflicted on the men there. He also explained the separation system, viz., separating the small coal from the round, and showed they were liable to be fined 2s. 6d. for filling one peck of small coals in one tub, which was what no man could avoid, There were many owners and viewers present, let them deny his statement if they could.

Mr. William Mitchell next addressed the meeting. He said they wanted the sympathy of the public, and through them that of their masters. God forbid that he should endeavour to set the men against their masters. It was the interest of both parties to be friends. They ought to meet together to settle their differences, but unfortunately the masters would not meet the men, which greatly irritated them, and had a tendency to make them more stubborn. He was sorry for that, but they could not help it ; they had done all they could as working men to settle the dispute, but had been unsuccessful. He defended the course the miners had taken ; but they had not the remotest intention of injuring the interest of the masters. All they wished was a fair remuneration for their labour. The men had put out a

bond which had offended the masters, and the masters had put out one which had offended the men. But if they only met together he had no doubt that they would jointly get rid of the most difficult and knotty points contained in both bonds, and hereby effect a reconciliation. The masters thought to starve the men into compliance, with their terms, for some of them had been saying "That they had brought the men down to starvation point before the strike, and therefore they could not stand long." But with the help of God they should be disappointed. The reason they had ceased to work was, their low wages, the grievances which had been explained to them, and the monthly bonds. They could not live on the conditions put forth by the masters. They had stood one month, and they would stand another. (Loud applause, and a voice, "yes, twelve months.") They wanted to be friendly and to unite with the masters ; and he firmly believed if they had been united that injurious tax on export coal would not have been in existence, and that if they only unite together now they would soon get it repealed. They wanted better ventilation and more attention to securing the roofs. They had only a small candle to work by or a dim lamp ; how, therefore, could they see the stones and black brass ? In consequence of the great heat of the mines they were compelled to work nearly naked. In such a state were their bodies that they could scarcely bear a flannel shirt to touch them. Indeed such was the extreme heat, that he had known his friend behind him (Fearley, of Bishopwearmouth) take off his shoes and pour out the sweat from them. (Great sensation.) Working in this state caused great immorality, especially among the young ; but only let them get fair wages and they then could properly educate, their children ; by which means crime would be removed, county rates lessened, and the public generally benefited. It had been said that the masters would turn them out of their houses, he trusted they had more manhood and Christian feeling than to turn them, and their wives and little ones, out to the wide world. He then referred to the misrepresentations of the press, and turning to the reporters entreated them to do them justice. They wished to do nothing that would disgrace either themselves or country, for they loved their country.

Mr. James Forrest, of the Boot and Shoemakers' Union, moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Fleming, of the Operative Tailors' Society, and carried by a large majority—"That having heard the statements of the preceding speakers, all practical miners, the meeting is of opinion that the pitmen of Northumberland and Durham are perfectly justifiable in the course they have taken, and this meeting pledges itself to use every exertion to support them during their present struggle."

Mr. William Daniels moved the next resolution:—"That the tax on export coals is not only an injury to the mining and shipping interests, but to the numerous workmen employed by those interests, and to tradesmen generally. This meeting therefore agrees to petition the legislature to repeal the above-named duty." He said he had been asked why the meeting had not been called before, and why it was not called by the mayor, and held in the Guildhall. In answer to this he would say that the meeting had been contemplated ten weeks ago, a committee had been appointed to obtain signatures to a requisition to the Mayor, wishing him to call the meeting, and they so far succeeded in the object as to obtain the names of 275 respectable inhabitants to the requisition, which was presented to the Mayor, Sir John Fife, who at once agreed not only to call the meeting, but also to preside over it. Sir John wished the deputation to call again in a few days, when he would fix the day on which the meeting should be held. In the interval the requisition had got, by some hocus-pocus process, into the hands of a police inspector, and that busybody had carried it round to a small knot of individuals who had signed it, and prevailed on them to say they had never signed it at all. Some said the heading was not the same as it was when they signed it, and one wiseacre declared it had no head at all when he signed it. In consequence of this dodge of some dozen renegade turncoats, the mayor refused to call the meeting. The committee therefore had called it on their own responsibility. He did not know what motive these tricksters had in acting in this disreputable manner, but he believed it was to prevent the miners getting the support and sympathy of the public. If this was their object he hoped they would be disappointed.

Mr. Byrne second the resolution, and said no one could deny but that the coal tax was a great injury. What was the foundation of Newcastle ? It was the coal trade, and whatever tended to cripple that trade must tend certainly to injure all classes connected with it.

Mr. Sinclair rose to move an address to W. B. Ferrand, Esq., M.P., for his advocacy of the rights of labour, but the chairman said they could not interfere with politics.

Thus ended one of the greatest and most important meetings ever held in Newcastle, a meeting which did great good by removing a vast amount of prejudice from the minds of the inhabitants concerning the miners, and convinced many of the justness of their cause. Similar meetings were held in all the towns of both counties. The eyes of the whole kingdom were now anxiously watching the result of this tremendous struggle of capital against labour, and the public began to see that the miners had some real grievances, and that from 30,000 to 40,000 men and boys would not have simultaneously ceased working, and thereby brought great privation and suffering upon themselves, their wives, and families, without some just and sufficient cause.

CHAPTER XIII.

ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE OWNERS TO START THE PITS. THE EVICTION OF COLLIERS. ATTEMPT TO STOP THE MEETINGS OF THE MEN. THE INTRODUCTION OF STRANGERS, AND CONTINUED EVICTIONS.

The effect of this cessation of labour was severely felt, not only by those immediately concerned, but by all tradesmen in the locality ; and all were now beginning to feel the value and importance of the pitmen. The employers, seeing the men still as determined as ever to go on with the contest till they got their own terms, had the horses sent down the pits again, their object being to set them to work with the off-handed men and officials about the collieries, together with a number of loafers and blackguards which they raked together from the large towns. Agents were despatched all over England, Wales, and Scotland, to recruit for men to take the places of the rebellious miners.

By and bye, the owners got together a sufficient number of men, of one sort or another, to enable them to set the mines going again, though not in full work. As soon as the strangers began to arrive, the necessity for providing for their shelter arose, and as the men on strike still occupied the cottages, it became apparent that they would have to be evicted unless they voluntarily evacuated. This they resolutely refused to do, and seeing that they had no place to go to, it is no wonder that they should have held on as long as possible. The work of ejecting the miners from their houses now commenced, the owners removing their furniture into lanes a distance from the colliery. The men had been urged from the first to keep the peace, but now their patience was sorely tested. Bands of policemen, with low, mean, ragged fellows, were ordered into the miners' houses, generally by the resident viewer, and before touching the furniture, "will you go to work?" was asked of the pitman. The answer being "No!" the orders were given to remove all things to the door. The yelling, shouting, and tinpanning, together with the pitiful cries of the children, had no effect on those inhuman beings who were engaged to do the work. The colliery carts were loaded with the furniture, and removed away into the lanes. In one lane, between Seghill and the Seaton Delaval avenue, a complete new village was built, chests of drawers, desk beds, &c., forming the walls of their new dwelling; and the top covered with canvas, or bedclothes, as the case might be. It was summer time, and they seemed to enjoy themselves under their difficulties remarkably well. Here and there, fiddles might be heard; whilst the men grouped together, smoking, singing, or chatting about the great battle, but never wavering in their confidence, or in their determination to fight out the battle to its bitter end.

Large numbers of men arrived from Wales, and other places, guarded by the police, and in some instances soldiers were brought on the scene to guard the new arrivals; but their presence was altogether unnecessary, for the men held to their determination to keep the peace. The miners got hold of the strangers, and tried to reason with them. The Welshmen said they had been misled, that they did not know there was a strike, and that they would willingly go back to

their own country if they had the means to do so. Money, though the miners could ill afford it, was paid for their passage back ; but in many cases they received the money and returned again to the collieries they had just left, not so much to work, as to get what they could from both masters and men—the owners offering them larger premiums to stay than they had at first agreed to.

A request was sent from Scotland for a deputation from Northumberland and Durham to hold a meeting at Dunfermline, as some of the English viewers had been there recruiting men. The deputation went, and a meeting of the spirited inhabitants of the above borough was held in the Masons' Hall on June 5th, 1844. Long before the time for taking the chair (7 o'clock) the spacious hall was filled. The greatest excitement was displayed in consequence of the soldiers being under arms, ready to act at a moment's notice, as were also the police. The magistrates were sitting, and the sheriff of the county was in his carriage in the street near the place of meeting. What was the meaning of all this preparation and display ? Why, it had been bruited about that the English delegates had come from the Miners' Association into the town to make a riot, and, as a matter of course, burn the town and murder the inhabitants. What silly creatures these authorities must have been to have believed such a very ridiculous story. But the real truth of the matter was that their object was to over-awe the speakers, and thus prevent the meeting being held. The meeting, however, was held, and passed off in a peaceable manner. Similar meetings were held in the south of England, and in many towns the authorities were terrified at the very name of the miners. A meeting was held at Bedworth, in Warwickshire, which was declared by Lord Lifford to be illegal, and the Yeomanry were ordered to be in readiness. The police were sent to prevent the speakers from speaking ; but they would not be stopped, and after the interference was discontinued, the meeting passed off quietly. The miners determined to have their grievances thoroughly laid before the public, for they thought there was no other way of getting any redress unless the public took up their case. They had the great majority of the press to fight against, and the strong power of capital. The coal owners, when

speaking of the strike, would say—"We will never yield to the men, we will force them to comply, no matter at what cost."

Wholesale turning to the door commenced in almost every colliery village ; pregnant women, bedridden men, and even innocent children in the cradle, were ruthlessly and remorselessly turned out. Age and sex were disregarded, no woman was too weak, no child too young, no grandma or grandsire too old ; but all must go forth. One poor woman, expecting to become a mother every hour, was turned to the door at one colliery, and another was dragged by the neck 100 yards along the railway ; and proofs might be multiplied to show that every vile scheme was tried, and every mean trick resorted to, in order to throw the men off their guard, and exasperate them, so that in a moment of excitement they might be induced to break the peace. The harsh and ruffian-like usage to which the miners were subjected in being turned out of their houses, and left with their wives and little ones to the mercy of the wild winds of heaven ; the breaking of their furniture to pieces, and throwing their household goods, with their food, out into the road ; the forcing of the aged, the sick, and the feeble women from the homes of their childhood, in many instances with little or no notice, was well calculated to induce angry passions in the breasts of the men. But they stifled their wrongs, and determined not to be provoked by this usage to break the peace ; nor yet by the blackguard and insulting language which was used by the heartless minions, or their still more heartless employers, whose bidding they gloried in carrying out. What a pitiable and inhuman spectacle was presented by the owners, viewers, and reverend gentlemen—men professing to be Christians, with British hearts beating in their bosoms—husbands and fathers themselves, who could stand by and give orders, and exult in the ruin they had made, the misery and destitution they had caused, and, perchance, the hearts they had broken. Without dwelling much longer on this brutal and unmanly conduct towards the miners—we will give one or two cases that occurred at Pelton Fell Colliery, where the whole of the men were turned out with their families. Among them was one old blind woman, 88 years of age, who was left exposed to the

cold and rain. At another colliery a young man to whom a misfortune had happened was ruthlessly put to the doors; whilst at another—where two young men had kept their mother who had been bedridden for years—mother and sons were all bundled into the street without pity or compunction.

Such, then, was the position of affairs at this time. The men, houseless and homeless, hungry and careworn, many with wives and children pining for food which they could not get for them, were still convinced of the justice of the cause they had adopted, and still determined to fight in that cause. Often, when the men were away at public or district meetings, the policemen, with their ruffian auxiliaries, would swoop down upon a village and turn all the defenceless inhabitants to the door, so that when the husbands or fathers returned, they would find their dear ones huddling together amongst their broken furniture, beneath some hedge. But ill-treatment seemed to have no effect in breaking the spirit of the men, but rather to brace them up with sterner resolutions.

CHAPTER XIV.

FURTHER MEETINGS OF THE MEN. PUBLIC SYMPATHY WITH THE MEN. EVICTIONS AT DERWENT IRON WORKS COLLIERY. PUBLIC DINNER TO THE MEN AT BLACKHILL. MORE MEETINGS OF THE MEN.

While the evictions were being conducted with great energy by the coal owners, the leaders of the strike movement were displaying as much zeal in agitating the country for the purpose of arousing public sympathy in favour of their unfortunate constituents. Their only successful mode of doing this was to organize public meetings in various places, and this they did whenever there was the least chance of success attending their efforts.

A general meeting of the pitmen of the two counties was held at Tantoby, near to Tanfield, on Tuesday, June 11th, for the purpose of considering the conditions of the monthly agreement. The meeting was held in a large field adjoining the village, and at the time appointed the numbers assembled could not be less than 20,000, the whole of whom came from their respective districts in procession, with music, flags, &c. In the middle of the field was placed a large

waggon, on the top of which a platform was erected for the accommodation of the speakers.

Mr. M. Elliott, having been called to the chair, briefly opened the meeting by requesting the men to be peaceable and orderly, and to give a patient hearing to those who would address them. He then called upon Mr. William Bird to move, and William Bulmer to second, the first resolution, which was to this effect :—" That this meeting is of opinion that the members of the Miners' Association, after having been ten weeks on strike, and during that time having witnessed many diabolical attempts of the masters to make them submit to worse than Russian serfdom ; and considering that as they have no other means of bettering their condition, than by firmly adhering to the principles of the association, that therefore this meeting pledges itself to be true to the union."

Mr. Joseph Norman was then about to address the meeting in support of the resolution, when a troop of the 6th Dragoons, or Royal Carbineers, headed by Mr. R. S. Surtees, of Hamsterly, one of the magistrates of the county of Durham, suddenly made their appearance in the village ; and though at first considerable excitement and alarm seemed to pervade the meeting, yet the men were soon composed, and resolved to keep their position. In a short time Mr. Surtees with the two officers in command, the Hon. Captain Jocelyn and Lieut. Knox, rode forward, and having expressed a wish to speak to the chairman, the men immediately opened their ranks, and they proceeded to the waggon. On reaching the platform Mr. Surtees addressed the chairman, and requested permission to read the following address:

" To the Chairman of the Pitmen's Meeting to be held at Tanfield Lea, this Eleventh Day of June.

Sir,—Complaints on oath having been made before us, the undersigned magistrates, we beg to say that we will feel particularly obliged by your impressing on the meeting the importance of orderly and peaceable conduct, as well during its continuance as in returning home ; and also the necessity of all parties assisting in preventing any breach of the peace that may be attempted by idle and disorderly persons, under pretence of attending, or having been at, the pitmen's meeting.

We are, Sir,
R. S. SURTEES.
PETER ANNANDALE.

Justice Room, Shotley Bridge,
June 11th, 1844."

The chairman thanked Mr. Surtees for the gentlemanly manner in which he had conveyed the request, and said he would take upon himself the responsibility of saying that everything should be conducted in a peaceable manner; upon which Mr. Surtees and the Hon. Captain Jocelyn and Lieut. Knox left the meeting. During this interview, Col. Bradshaw of the 37th Infantry, and Major Wemyss, superintendent of the Durham Rural Police, were observed riding at the outskirts of the meeting.

Mr. George Armstrong moved, and Mr. Thomas Hay seconded, the following resolution :—" That it is the opinion of this meeting that the members of the Miners' Association, after duly deliberating upon the conditions held out in the master's monthly agreement, consider it inimical to their interest and future welfare, and, in consequence, they pledge themselves to stand out uutil the terms demanded by the men on the various collieries be acceded to."

The chairman having put the motion, it was carried unanimously, after which another resolution, to the following effect was proposed and carried :—" That the members of the Miners' Association pledge themselves that, after getting to work, they will settle all the debts they contract."

The meeting was afterwards addressed by two delegates from London, who detailed the whole of the proceedings there up to the time they left. They stated that they had been well received everywhere, but as yet the amount of subscriptions was trifling. The meeting then dispersed.

Another important meeting took place on Monday, July 8th, at Shadon's Hill, and was most numerously attended, there being present not less than 25,000 persons, including a great number of the fair sex. Many of the Tyne Collieries walked in procession through Newcastle to the meeting with their flags flying and music playing, and conducted themselves in a most orderly manner. The following are the resolutions which were unanimously passed. 1st, moved by Mr. Norman, seconded by Mr. Hardy, and supported by Mr. B. Watson :—" That in the opinion of this meeting, the master's monthly agreement is calculated to break up our union and destroy our liberties as Englishmen, therefore this meeting pledges itself to resist it by all legal and constitutional means." 2nd, moved by Mr. Fawcett,

seconded by Mr. George Charlton, and supported by Mr. Richardson :—" That in the opinion of this meeting the struggle in which we are engaged is one of justice and righteousness, and based upon these principles it cannot fail to triumph, therefore this meeting pledges itself to continue the holy contest until our just claims are acceded to." 3rd, moved by Joseph Beaston, seconded by Thomas Pratt, and supported by R. Archer :—" That this meeting having seen the diabolical attempts of our masters to force us into a breach of the peace, therefore pledges itself to keep within the pale of the law by firmly adhering to the principles and objects of the Miners' Association." 4th, moved by Mr. C. Haswell, and seconded by Mr. Daniels :—" That the thanks of this meeting are due and are hereby given to the trades of London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, the carpet weavers of Durham and Barnard-castle, and to the trades of various other towns ; also to the miners generally of the United Kingdom, for the support they have rendered during our present struggle, which we trust they will continue until our contest is brought to a successful close, and we pledge ourselves to assist them in return, should they ever be placed in the like circumstances."

After the meeting has broke up Mr. W. P. Roberts, the pitmen's attorney-general, arrived, he having been detained at Bishop Auckland attending some trials, and a supplementary meeting was therefore held which was only addressed by Messrs. Roberts and Beasley.

The owners of the collieries at Derwent Iron Works commenced to turn their workmen to the door in July as early as eight o'clock in the morning. Mr. Richardson, who was an active intelligent man, and a member of the executive, was the first turned out. As he refused to walk, he was literally carried to the door, and when he reached the outside, he immediately jumped upon a form, and commenced addressing the assembled people. He said it was the proud boast of Englishmen that the working man's house was his castle, but the miners of Northumberland and Durham gave the lie to that, for thousands of families now were houseless.

Upwards of 700 persons sat down to a most excellent

and substantial dinner, consisting of beef, mutton, ham, pies, &c., which was voluntarily provided by the inhabitants of Black Hill and Shotley Bridge, in order to show their disgust and disapproval of the harsh proceedings of the coal owners. After dinner a public meeting was held, Mr. J. Olley, nail manufacturer, in the chair, when the speakers were Messrs. J. Coxon, engineer, James Emery, mason, William Atkinson, mason, and E. Richardson. The meeting was conducted and separated in an orderly manner.

There were forty joiners, masons, and blacksmiths at this Colliery, and as only two would consent to assist in turning the men out of their dwellings, the others were discharged for having refused.

Another meeting was held at Willington, Mr. Charles Reveley in the chair. The speakers were William Bell, Percy Main; Robert Henderson, and Joseph Fawcett, West Moor; and Alexander Stoves, who had been one of the deputation to London. The following resolution was proposed by Mr. Fawcett and seconded by the Rev. J. Spoor :—" That after the statements of the several speakers, this meeting is of opinion that the miners of the counties of Northumberland and Durham are an ill-used body of men, and therefore we consider them perfectiy justifiable in their present cessation from labour." On being put it was carried in the midst of cheering.

The day following a district meeting was held at Scaffold Hill. Mr. A. Stoves presided, and after stating the object of the meeting, he introduced Mr. E. Hall, Walker Colliery, to propose the first resolution, which was as follows :—" That after viewing the mean artifice of the masters in order to break up the union, we feel more determined than ever to stand by the terms offered by us to our late employers." This was seconded by Mr. J. Spoors, of Percy Main, who in an able manner, showed the stratagems of the masters. It was also supported by Mr. Charles Reveley, of Wallsend, and carried unanimously.

Mr. C. Haswell moved the second resolution :—" That we feel grateful to the public in general, and to the shopkeepers in particular, for the support we have received from them, and we therefore pledge ourselves to give them our favours when we resume our work," which being seconded

by Mr. William Lumsdon, of Gosforth, was carried unanimously.

The third resolution, proposed by Mr. Robert Henderson, of West Moor, seconded by Mr. R. Turnbull, of Seghill, and supported by Mr. William Jobling, of Walker, was to the following effect—" That we view the conduct of the police, special constables, blacklegs, &c., with abhorrence, in having drawn their cutlasses and presented pistols to inoffensive men, to cause a breach of the peace, we therefore pledge ourselves to do no injury either to person or property."

A vote of thanks was then proposed to T. Duncombe, Esq., M.P., for his able advocacy of the miners in the House of Commons.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INHUMANITY OF THE EJECTIONS. ATTEMPT BY THE MEN TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE. CONDUCT OF THE COAL OWNERS GENERALLY, AND OF THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY IN PARTICULAR. THE WORKHOUSE CLOSED AGAINST THE MEN.

The coal owners continued to introduce into the villages a number of idle, lawless vagabonds, who had been gathered from the low neighbourhoods of large towns throughout the country, and induced to hire themselves as pitmen by promises of high bounties and princely wages. The work of eviction went on with briskness throughout the whole of the two counties ; in many places the men on strike being evicted before the owners had any need for their houses for new comers. It is true that the masters had a right to do what they liked with their own, but on the score of humanity and fellow-feeling they might have refrained from turning their old servants to the doors till they had new ones ready to occupy their places. Throughout the counties of Durham and Northumberland there were thousands of cottages tenantless, whilst their late inmates were camping in the open air, exposed to the inclemency of the weather. The owners seemed to have no chance to beat the men down without resorting to this cruel and dastardly revenge, and the great wonder was how the men could keep the peace under such trying circumstances. At the meetings which were

held, it was often said—"May God defend the poor oppressed against the rich oppressor," and truly there was cause for this expression.

The following address by the Committee of the Miners' Association was drawn up, and sent to the Coal Owners' Committee :—

"GENTLEMEN,—The pitmen of Northumberland and Durham have been off work now three months, and to all appearance will hold out for many weeks longer sooner than go to work on the terms offered by your agents, the viewers ; and they are seemingly as determined not to agree to the terms offered by the men. Thus the parties are at opposite extremes, and one or both parties must be considered not only culpable, but also amenable for any amount of distress or privation to which hundreds of other persons are subjected, through the protracted nature of the strike, seeing they do not move from the position first taken up, so as to meet and make some approximation to an amicable adjustment of all differences. Gentlemen, we must be convinced that what has been repeatedly stated (we beg to refer you to our former reports) is proof sufficient that all means resorted to on our part for obtaining an interview in order to effect an amicable adjustment of all points in dispute, have been treated with silent contempt, or what is worse, we have been told that no concession would be made to our demands. Seeing then that every other means had proved failures, we in the end proposed—and again propose to submit all matters of dispute to the arbitration of disinterested persons—to be chosen by the masters on one part, and by the men on the other.

"Reference has been made to a vexatious line of proceedings to which the masters have been subjected, which for the future they are determined not to tolerate, without once specifying what the proceedings are. Here it may be stated that the workmen have been considerably annoyed by the attempts of the (so-called) masters to withhold their earnings, and when those earnings were requested to be paid, though the application was ever so humble, it was generally treated with contempt and insult ; and such treatment frequently led the workmen to adopt other proceedings, which might be considered by the owners vexatious, and however determined they, the masters, may be to put an end to such, the only effectual method would be to give a fair remuneration to their workmen, and treat them with kindness and consideration.

"Once more we appeal to you ; can we obtain an interview ? Tell us how, and by what means ? From a consciousness that such an interview would be highly desirable, we entreat you to bestow on this our address your speedy and serious attention.

"We are, gentlemen, on behalf of the miners of Northumberland and Durham,

WILLIAM RICHARDSON.
EDWARD RICHARDSON.
JOHN CLARK, DISTRICT SECRETARY.

MINERS' ASSOCIATION, COMMITTEE ROOM, NEWCASTLE."

The coal owners took no notice of the miners' proposition, but treated them with the same contempt they had shown towards them throughout, and every means was resorted to to get men from other parts, and to induce the off-handed men and mechanics of the collieries to go down the pits to work. They also endeavoured to induce the weaker members of the union to break away from its ranks ; and, not content with using efforts which must in such a struggle be regarded as legitimate by the belligerents, several colliery owners gave notice to parties who had shops on their estates, that if they supplied the miners with any provisions out of their shops, they might look for a notice to quit their places of business, and to have all their custom taken from them.

When the miners failed with their address to the coal owners' committee, they addressed a letter to Lord Londonderry, requesting him to exert his influence to bring about a meeting between the coal owners and their late workmen, with a view to a settlement of the points at issue between them. Nothing could be more fair and upright, more correct or straightforward, than this mode of proceeding on the part of the men. It seemed to acknowledge a readiness to yield to argument, when such argument should be sound, as well as a resolution to maintain a cause so long as that cause should be considered just. Though the men had by making that offer done Lord Londonderry a very great honour, by giving him an opportunity of acting as mediator in so important a matter, and though they had relied upon his generosity and had appealed to his feeling as a man, that nobleman was too obtuse to appreciate the very great compliment paid him, and too devoid of the ordinary feelings of a real noblemen to permit him to forget for a brief moment his own paltry insignificant self, and to do for once in the course of his miserable life, a gracious and generous act. Instead of responding with alacrity—as any man with half a heart in his breast, or with any desire for the good opinion of his fellow men, would have done—this insolent purse-proud nobleman returned a saucy, impertinent, and overbearing reply to the effect " that he had nothing whatever to say to such committee." He then proceeded in a self-sufficient and ostentatious manner to eulogise himself and cry up his own charity, philanthropy, and

forbearance. His lordship was compelled to act the part of a trumpeter to himself, and although he had had a considerable deal of practice, he acquitted himself indifferently after all. There is no hypocrisy more abominable than this conduct on the part of one of the richest hereditary senators of England. But his tyranny did not stop here ; it went to more appalling lengths still. On the 20th July he issued a notice to the effect that the tradesmen of Seaham Harbour, a town upon this noble marquis's estate, should refrain from giving any credit, or affording any supplies to the miners not at work, nor even to their families. This was visiting the sins of the fathers, if any sins there were, upon the heads of the innocent little children with a vengeance. What cold blooded cruelty was this ! The notice proceeded to state that all tradesmen infringing this command should be " marked men," and that all custom on the part of the marquis should thereafter be withdrawn from them. Here was awful tyranny—worthy only of those dark ages when feudal barons ruled the land. Was it really a deed of modern date, occurring in the middle of the nineteenth century, or a dream, a figment of the brain, a romance, a fiction ? A real live marquis, with wealth and all around calculated to give comfort and happiness, condescending to behave himself in this blackguard fashion ? A man who could rise in the morning, and from the window of his dressing room survey his ample estates, and say proudly to himself, " I am monarch of all I survey," bemeaning himself to do so paltry and contemptible an act ! A man, who enjoyed his princely fortune without having to toil, denying to his poor neighbours the possibility of a bare existence ! Impossible ! Unfortunately it was only too real, too true, too possible. But there was another clause in this ordinance. Should the tradesmen of Seaham Harbonr persist in selling their goods to the miners the marquis threatened to remove all his own custom to Newcastle ! Thus a battle of Right or Wrong was to be settled by starving out, and Right was to be stifled, as it often had been, by Wrong. It was useless to resist when one man had such engines as these in his power. In his speech before the House of Lords in favour of Mr. O'Connell, Serjeant Sir Thomas Wild stated that if half-a-dozen people combined together to take away the custom

from a particular tradesmen that was actionable at law. Surely the Marquis of Londonderry had committed a grievous offence in endeavouring to intimidate tradesmen against serving the pitmen who had struck ; for if it was a crime for customers to combine against tradesmen it must be equally a crime for tradesmen to combine against customers. Lord Londonderry acted upon the pretence or conviction that he was in the right ; but the pitmen also contended that they were in the right. It was not because the marquis was a lord that he was to be in the right. From amongst the pitmen there were persons who, if they had not learned Latin and Greek in the University, had learnt common sense, the best of all knowledge, during the experience of a laborious and not over prosperous life. They presented the assemblage of many intellects opposed to one, collective against solitary wisdom. It might be argued that the pitmen were self-interested in their opinions. But was not the marquis self-interested in his opinion ? The lords who possessed gigantic fortunes were often as mean and pitiful in their financial arrangements with their workmen as those workmen were cautious and prudent in their own pecuniary bargains. Altogether the conduct of the Marquis of Londonderry and that of the other coal owners was disgraceful in the extreme. The pitmen requested a meeting to discuss their grievances with a view to the settlement of them, and this act of justice was obstinately denied. The inference was that " Might " alone was considered to constitute " Right " in this affair. The coal owners denied an opportunity of mutual explanation and thereby encouraged the belief that they were conscious of being in the wrong ; but still persisted through motives of self-interest in their arbitrary and inhuman measures. If each side was convinced of the justness of its proceedings why not settle the points of dispute by arbitration ? The party which refused to accede to this proposal tacitly, but emphatically admitted it was in the wrong. The coal owners were not only punishing thousands of men, by expelling them from their houses and compelling them to encamp in the open air, but were also plunging multitudes of unhappy women and innocent children into the depths of dire, protracted and ineffable misery.

The pitmen had all along been subjected to a severe test,

but now a new act of cruelty, unexampled in the annals of English history, was perpetrated upon them. Even the workhouses were closed against them, their hungry wives, and starving children. Magistrates and clergymen alike gave their sanction and protection to this holy work ; and some of them even gave their presence and superintendence to see that there was no breach of the peace in their illegal and unjust orders being executed. Shopkeepers were threatened with ruin who offered bread or shelter. The poor creatures were turned from their hovels, they were menaced with the appearance of the military located at every colliery village ; but they bore every outrage and indignity without physical remonstrance. They stood with tears in their eyes and saw villainous wretches throwing to the door articles to which the memory of past years had given sanctity ; but they had been taught by their leaders that if the peace was broken, they might bid farewell to their cherished union ; and such was the power, eloquence, and advocacy of their leaders, that the peace was not broken, even under such trying circumstances. Not even the sight of their furniture and relics of their childhood being dashed to pieces on the stones ; of innocent babes carried out in their cradles to be nipped by the chilly airs of heaven ; of the inhuman expulsion of grandmothers who had been living with them, some eighty years of age ; of the cruel eviction of those who had met with accidents in the pits before the strike commenced ; of barbarous turning to the door of poor women dreading to become mothers every moment ; nay, not even the dragging of a poor woman along the waggon-way at the West Moor, for 80 yards, till she fainted, could make these men break the law. It was not because they were cowards and dare not do it ; but they were taught it was the object of the coal owners to make them break the peace, so that they could fill the prisons, transport and hang them as they had done in 1832, and thus break up their union, and enslave the generations to follow after, and they nobly determined to set "their superiors" an example in the courageous forbearance of their passions.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OPINION OF THE IRISH AND ENGLISH PRESS ON THE CONDUCT OF THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY.

Great excitement prevailed throughout the United Kingdom in consequence of the strike, and the miners of Northumberland and Durham were the subject of conversation in almost every circle. The press also grew very eloquent, though, for the most part, in opposition to the men. The following is an article which appeared in the *Dublin Monitor*;—

"This most noble specimen of humanity, who styles himself 'Vane Londonderry,' has been asserting the 'Rights of property' upon his wife's estates in Durham after a right regal fashion. He is, as most of our readers know, a coal owner, and derives not only his great wealth, but the splendour with which he shines in the eye of the court and of the public, from the labour of men and boys who seldom see the light of the sun. He is, in short, the premier marquis of carbonic nobility. His coat of arms is studded with black diamonds, and its supporters are pitmen. Without the shafts, from which issue continual chaldrons of round coals and slack, the 'Vane Londonderry' would be a very superficial person indeed, and therefore it seems no more than reasonable that he should rest the pillars of the constitution itself upon those dark foundations, and imagine that the order of the creation depends upon their being kept in proper trim and tackle. A rebellion in the mines is as a grumbling and griping in the bowels of peace, law, and order. It must be repressed by every means that fate and physical aid have placed at the disposal of the lords of this upper earth. It appears that the underground villains of the Durham Collieries have turned out lately for a larger share of the profits than their sublunary masters are willing to allow them, and what is termed 'a strike' has been the result. They will raise no more coal until the masters raise their wages. What the merits of this claim may be we know not. It may be a just one, although the owners are very indignant at it, and have entered into a combination to banish from their native dens and caverns all who shall contumaciously refuse to return to their work on the old terms. This is so harsh a proceeding that the fair presumption is that it proceeds from the party habitually tyrannical and oppressive, and therefore we feel almost justified in believing that the call on the part of the miners for an advance of wages is fair and reasonable. Lord Londonderry has taken just such a part in the affair as any one might expect he would. He has issued a proclamation, wherein he is amazed than any 'well-thinking colliers' should think of 'standing out in rebellion'—rebellion against the owners of the whip at the mouth of the pit—and his amazement swells into stupefaction when he contemplates 'the Vane and Tempest pitmen, whose families had worked for successive ages in the mines.' Happy pitmen, *sua si bona norint*. The most noble 'Vane Londonderry' is amazed beyond expression (as well he may

be) that they should be indifferent to his ' really paternal advice and kind feelings.' Ah ! the thick-skulled, black-skinned rascals, they cannot comprehend the advantages they are perilling, not for themselves alone but for generations of their descendants yet unborn, in turning the heart of such a tender and feeling proprietor against them. It is most true, indeed, Lord Londonderry stands towards those pitmen in *loco parentis*. He is their natural protector—much disposed (as it appears) by sentiment and affection, to consult their welfare ; yes, and if he might say it without offence, bound in a certain degree by a consideration of all the tens and hundreds of thousands which the Vane and Tempest pitmen drag out of the earth for the use of those illustrious houses, not to ' exact their sweat ' too vigorously. But then what can he do when a rebellion worse than fire-damp is ready to explode in the pits ? His ' word ' is pledged, and in such cases the word of a noble lord is often to be relied on. ' Duty, too '—Oh, sacred duty !—' to his property, his family, and station,' would make lenity criminal. ' I superintended,' says his lordship—and we can readily fancy the tears that stood in his eyes when he wrote—' I superintended many ejectments, it had no avail. I warned you next I would bring over workmen from my Irish estate, and turn more men out ; you heeded me not. I have now brought forty Irishmen to the pits, and I will give you all one more week's notice ; and if by the 13th of this month a large body of my pitmen do not return to their labours, I will obtain one hundred more men, and proceed to eject that number, who are now illegally and unjustly in possession of my houses, and in the following week another hundred shall follow.' Bravo ! thou most potent, brave, and conscientious Lord Londonderry ; never forget the duty you owe to your station, to your family, and to your property. No Christian can neglect such things. This is pure and undefiled religion in the eyes of this honest world of ours. Turn all the varlets out, hundreds at a time, with their wives and little children. To those families you owe no duty. They have been long enough grubbing under the ground for you and yours. It is time they should go forth and see the light of heaven. There is a wisdom too (if you could understand it) in replacing them with your Irish serfs. It will hide the working of the property system in this country. An excellent mode it is of draining the overcharged surface of Downshire, to carry off the superfluities a hundred fathom or so beneath the spires of Durham Cathedral. Nevertheless, it seemeth unkind toward these convenient, easy tools of your marquisate's high displeasure, at the very moment when you are using them for so agreeable a purpose, that you should brand them as foreigners. ' In twelve weeks more,' you say, ' the collieries will be peopled by foreigners.' This is an ugly word, my lord ; Irishmen do not like it ; nor is it just or prudent to employ it, when all but repealers wish to strangle the belief that the inhabitants of the several parts of the United Kingdom are all of one name and kin. Some writers have condemned Homer for representing Polyphemus during his horrid feast in the cave (which by the bye may have been a coal pit) in such hideous colours that the reader feels more inclined to laugh than to shudder at those cannibal exploits. But Homer knew

human nature well. He was aware that the most absurd portion of mankind are frequently the most mischievous likewise. There is much of farce in the words and letters of this Marquis of Londonderry, but his actions are terribly serious. He mouths it like 'Bombastes Furioso,' at the same time that whole villages feel the real tragedy that is wrapped up in his fustian. Is it not sad to think that such a man can threaten to enforce the 'rights of property' in language like this, and sadder still that the Government of the country will place at his disposal the means, both civil and military, of carrying those threats into effect with his own hands. Thus he concludes his manifesto :—'I will be on the spot myself. The civil and military power will be at hand, to protect the good men and the strangers, and you may rely upon it the majesty of the law and the rights of property will be protected and prevail.' Such was the declaration of Vane Londonderry ; God knows, *vain* enough."

EXTRACTS FROM "PUNCH," JULY, 1844.

"The Marquis of Londonderry's Pitmen.—There has been a great turn out of the Marquis of Londonderry's pitmen, for which incident, deny it as he may, we have little doubt that the marquis is uncommonly grateful, and for this reason ; it affords him an opportunity for the exercise of his literary powers ; and that the marquis is smitten with the fatal charms of pen, ink, and foolscap, who that has read the noble writer's histories and travels can deny ; hence the marquis has, from Holderness House, sent to his pitmen several epistles full of 'paternal advice,' the result of this is the following answer of the pitmen to their anxious father, Londonderry.

Durham, July 22nd.

"Marquis,—We have received your letter that calls upon us to leave the union and return to our work. In answer to this we say, Oh marquis ! leave you your union, that coals may be cheaper, and the pitmen's labour more abundant. You charge us with combining ; we, marquis, charge you with the like act ; we combine with one another that we may have the value of the sweat of our brows ; you belong to the coal trade union, to the union of masters, banded together to keep up the price of coals, to stint the supply of the market, that it may always bring a certain price. What, then, wealth may combine, but labour not ? You conjure us to look upon the ruin we are bringing on our wives, our children, our county, and the country ; we in reply, conjure you to consider the misery, the wretchedness, the suffering, that every winter is brought upon the London poor by the coal owners' union, that, obstinate for high prices, makes firing an unattainable luxury. You say that you will come among us, and proceed to eject us, taking especial care that the civil and military power shall be at hand, to support you. Oh father ! is it thus you will show your paternal love to your pitmen's little ones ? Come among us, marquis, pray come, and never dream that we shall want the civil and military power to settle the differences between us. No, fear not, after a little talk, we shall agree in amity and love ; and in the hope of this dear father, we remain your affectionate children of the pit."

Lord Londonderry's second "ukase" warned all the shopkeepers of Seaham Harbour against giving credit to his rebellious pitmen. The egg declares the bird. If the inhabitants of Seaham continued to trust the pitmen, Lord Londonderry threatened that he would immediately go down, and carrying the ocean from its place, in some bucket made for the occasion, ruin the town for ever.

The *Northern Star*, in commenting upon the above spicy article, wrote as follows :—

"After Vane Londonderry's audacious threat to 'his shopkeepers' of 'his town of Seaham' had appeared in the newspapers, Mr. O'Conner met Mr. Alsop, an extensive and highly respectable, and as highly cultivated city broker ; one of whose judgment Mr. O'Connor had a very high opinion. Mr. O'Connor said, 'Alsop, I wish you would answer Londonderry's insolent decree' ; to which Mr. Alsop replied, 'I have my answer ready written in my pocket ; and perhaps you will take the trouble of transmitting it to the miners' ; whereupon he took a five-pound note from his purse, and handed it to Mr. O'Connor, saying :—'If all feel as I do on this subject, all will answer it as I do, according to their means ; and if I was a shopkeeper of Seaham, the autocrat should find that I had some English blood in me notwithstanding his vulgar Irish threat.' If all had acted with the same spirit as Mr. Alsop, the Irish Nicholas would have had to take his slaves to some other market."

EXTRACT FROM "THE LONDON MERCANTILE JOURNAL."

"Coal Monoply of the Tyne, the Wear, and the Tees.—The dispute between the leviathan owners of coal mines in the North of England and their workmen still continues unsettled, and I fear, is likely to remain so for some time to come, as the former are realizing immense fortunes at the expense of the public, but of the Londoners in particular, as the extra price now paid for this necessary article is an extra tax on London alone of £700,000 per annum. But this is not all, for the total quantity upon which this extra charge is paid exceeds 6,800,000 tons, realizing a total extra profit of £1,700,000 to this over-grown monoply. The workmen turned out for an advance of wages of twopence per ton, and yet the newspapers of the North continue weekly to heap obloquy on the poor fellows, calling them 'misguided men,' 'duped men,' &c., and blaming their paid agents (as though *they* had no paid agents) for duping them, but saying nothing against those who have made princely fortunes out of their labour."

How did our immaculate local press of that period, and their masters, the coal owners, relish this ? Instead of taking advantage of the opportunity which was thus afforded them of making themselves a power with the miners of the North, our local journals of that period, as they have often

on other occasions done since, took the side of the masters against the men. Some of them were subsidized by the employers, it is true, but it was a melancholy sight to see a "free press" pandering to the oppressive and tyrannical passions of the wealthy and insolent minority, when their proper mission was to advocate with force the rights and interests of the oppressed majority. They looked no farther than their own brief day, they pocketed the guineas of the masters, and scornfully rejected the pence of the pitmen, which would have developed their journals into organs of power instead of the drivelling puerile things which they afterwards became when the temporary sustenance of the masters was withdrawn.

CHAPTER XVII.

TACTICS OF THE COAL OWNERS TO GET FRESH MEN. IMPORTATION OF STRANGERS. RETURN OF MEN TO STAFFORDSHIRE. STRIKE AMONGST THE CORNISH MINERS AT RADCLIFFE. THE REDUCED STATE OF THE MEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Having, by the foregoing extracts, given an idea as to what some of the Irish and English journalists thought of the strike, and of some of the leading coal owners connected with it, we will return to the villages and the camps in which the pitmen and their families had been living for weeks. Happily the weather was fine, it being in the height of a beautiful summer season, and the out-door life was therefore less severe than it would have been had they been turned out in winter time. Still it was hard enough in all conscience, and the uncouth and savage nature of their dwellings was rendered the more unpleasant by the almost entire absence of food; for though many shopkeepers behaved very nobly to the men, and though the leaders by their industry gathered large sums of money together, still the shopkeepers had to live themselves, and all the subscriptions, large as they were, were found miserably deficient for the purpose of feeding thousands of healthy hungry persons. In spite of being houseless and hungry, in spite of seeing their places occupied by men with whom they could have no

sympathy or feeling in common, in spite of many insults which were daily heaped upon them, the men bore up with a wonderful courage, which only a consciousness of right could induce.

John Greenhorn, an overman, at Marley Hill Colliery, who went to Staffordshire to endeavour to obtain men, told the men there that the miners of Northumberland and Durham had got their strike settled, but that Marley Hill, being a new colliery just commencing, and having got twenty-four men, they wanted ten more to stock the colliery. He also told them the men were earning from 50s. to £3 10s. per fortnight ; whilst, at the same time, he knew they were paying the few "blacklegs" they had working at the colliery 3s. 6d. per day. Had they being working at the old rates, and paid by score price, they could not have earned more than 10s. per fortnight. In spite of the brilliant prospects and fine promises, he could only succeed in inducing four men instead of ten to accompany him. He brought them to Marley Hill, and left them at a farmhouse, though he had previously promised them he would take them to his own house. As soon as the union men heard of their arrival they managed to obtain an interview with them, when they told them they had been deceived, and that they were still on strike. The Staffordshire men were much astonished and declared they would not start work. They were taken to the union house, Greenhorn followed them, and there they accused him with the lies he had told them. The men went back to Staffordshire, and vowed that if ever Greenhorn came there again they would "mark" him. This Greenhorn was a professing Christian, but as the play goes "like master like man."

The agents of Radcliffe Colliery, in the North, by false pretences brought thirty-two Cornish miners to supplant their old pitmen, and engaged them for twelve months at 4s. per day. On the first pay they received but 3s., 2s. 4d., or 2s. 6d., according to their respective merits ; the consequence of this was a strike for two days, during which time a great deal of abusive language, in broad Cornish, was used ; one tithe of which conduct would have subjected any of the native miners to the dungeon cell. At last another agreement was entered into for a fortnight at the 4s.

per day ; and this was fulfilled at an immense sacrifice to the owners, for these men could not hew above four tubs per day on an average. It was reported that this insane system cost the owners of Radcliffe Colliery £90 per fortnight, and yet they said the demands of their own miners were unreasonable, and to comply with them would be tantamount to delivering up to them the property they were possessed of ; though their just demands were not, by one half, as much as the wages guaranteed to the strangers, all of whom were totally unacquainted with hewing and pit work in general. After the second fortnight the viewer offered these men 4d. per tub, and they all, with the exception of four, absconded. But even this price was more than the native miners were asking. A reward of £50 was offered for the apprehension of the runaway Cornish men. The Newcastle police captured four of them, brought them to Amble in gigs, together with a *posse* of police. The poor fellows were kept from the Monday night till the Wednesday morning under strict surveillance, and on the Tuesday night they attempted to make their escape. What a beautiful row was then kicked up ! Such a running of police and special constables hither and thither, that the otherwise quiet town of Amble was thrown into a state of alarm. These worthy conservators of the public peace made far more riot in chasing and hunting these four poor fellows than would have transported 14 or 15 pitmen. One energetic and intelligent officer got " hoisted on his own petard " with a vengeance, for, in a general *melee* which took place, he got pummelled with his own staff to his heart's content. Next morning great excitement prevailed on seeing the overman, banksmen, understrappers, and police, riding and running over hedge and ditch, through standing corn, and overhauling the poor " campers," with whom, it was asserted, the strangers had taken refuge. One of the very clever officials maintained he saw a Cornish footmark near the camp, but, in spite of his keen observation, they escaped. The others who had absconded were arrested by the North Shields police force, and a steam-boat, carrying the police force and the special constables, was sent to bring them to Alnmouth, and thence to Alnwick, to answer for their conduct before the magistrates. At the Special Justices' Meeting, held at Alnwick, on July 25th, Mr.

Bushby, solicitor for the Cornish men ; and Mr. Thomas Brown, for himself and partners ; a decision was given in favour of the strangers to the great delight of the pitmen on strike. So after all the braggadocio, the company had to pay the piper. Mr. Bushby, with a blue and white sash, and his clients with cockades of the same colour, paraded through the streets of Alnwick, and then returned to Amble in the evening amidst the cheers of the populace.

At this period almost every colliery in the two counties had commenced work with officials about the collieries, and strangers who had been imported into the two counties by their agents. The strike had now continued fifteen weeks, and reports began to be industriously circulated that men were breaking away from the ranks. The unionists became alarmed at such reports, and district meetings were held almost every day in some part of the two counties. The misery and destitution of families who were encamped in the lanes, exposed to all kinds of weather, in many cases with sickness amongst them, now beggared all description. The support the miners got from the general public was not sufficient to meet the crying wants of their little ones ; and resolutions were passed at the meetings held by the men at the various collieries, that before they would submit to go to work on the old terms they would pawn or sell everything that belonged to them. They did not only formally resolve to do this, but arrangements were made, and committees formed to take goods away to pledge, and in hundreds of cases eight-day clocks, watches, and other valuables, even to the wedding rings from the poor women's fingers, were yielded up in order that food might be bought for the starving creatures. In this strike there was a very remarkable communal feeling exhibited, for the pitmen and their wives did not demand to have returned to them the whole of the value which the articles they had given up had produced, but willingly allowed the food bought with the money to be meted out fairly and impartially, as well to those who had not contributed towards its purchase as to those who had. Starving as they were, these poor, ignorant, and uneducated creatures were yet capable of teaching by example a fine moral lesson in humanity to those self-styled "superiors," their recent employers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER LARGE MEETING ON NEWCASTLE TOWN MOOR. GREAT PROCESSION AND DEMONSTRATION. ATTEMPT TO STOP THE PUBLICATION OF THE "MINERS' ADVOCATE." LARGE MEETING AT BISHOP AUCKLAND.

The local press now began to teem with reports very damaging to the union, asserting and reiterating that the strike was only kept going by a few of the leading agitating agents of the defunct union, for motives of self-interest, and that the great majority of the men had returned to their work. The miners therefore determined to hold another general meeting on the 30th July, in order to show the public that they had not yet given up the contest, "to conquer or die" having been their motto from the beginning; and consequently a general meeting was called to take place on the Newcastle Town Moor, by the consent of Sir John Fife, the Mayor. The meeting was announced by large placards, which stated it was called "for the purpose of taking into consideration the present position and future prospects of the pitmen of Northumberland and Durham." It also stated "that in order to convince the inhabitants that there had not such a great number left the union, a procession would take place. The Tyne Collieries will meet at Sunderland Road End, Gateshead, at eleven o'clock, and will there be joined by the brethren of the Wear and Tees, and walk in procession through Gateshead and Newcastle to the place of meeting, chair to be taken at one o'clock." This placard was headed, "Peace, Law, and Order." To prevent confusion in such a large body of men forming and walking in procession, the following order of procession was published. "All the collieries coming in by the Wreckington Road to halt before coming to Sunderland Road End, on the right-hand side of the said Wreckington Road. All the collieries coming by the Low Fell or Durham New Roads, to halt within the said Road End on the right-hand side. All collieries coming by the Sunderland Road to halt within the said Road End, on the left-hand side. The collieries from the North to pass on and to form a line on the left-hand of the Wreckington Road. On the signal being given by Mr. Daniels to move forward, the men on the right-hand of

the Wreckington Road (No. 1) to take the lead, to be followed by the men on the left-hand of the said Road (No. 2), then the men on the Durham New Road (No. 3) to fall in behind the above, and the men on the Sunderland Road (No. 4) to fall in last. The order of the procession to be as follows: passing along High Street, Church Street, Newcastle Bridge, Sandhill, Side, Dean Street, Grey Street, Blackett Street, Northumberland Street, Barras Bridge, and keeping the turnpike road to the Moor. Conductors of the procession; Messrs. Dodds, Daniels and Jobling. At the time appointed the men assembled in thousands, with their flags, headed by their bands of music; and by the judicious arrangements of the conductors were soon marshalled into procession in perfect order, and on the concerted signal being given, the immense body began to move towards the place of meeting. Some conception may be formed of the numbers from the fact that the procession was upwards of one hour and a half in passing the Theatre Royal, Grey Street. There were seventy-two flags belonging to the different collieries, most of them formed of silk, and beautifully painted, bearing appropriate mottoes. Nothing could be more imposing than the sight of the men marching in procession as they came on to the Town Moor. As far as the eye could reach for near a mile, were seen flags flying in the breeze, men walking in perfect order, while "ever and anon" were heard the dulcet sounds of the different bands.

Mr. Mark Dent, having been called to the chair, made a few preliminary remarks, and introduced to the meeting, Mr. James Hardy, who said that he really thought that the procession which he had that day witnessed passing through Newcastle to the Moor, would give a "broadsider" to those who had been at such pains to misrepresent them. He was really at a loss to know where all these men came from, they were indeed the hard-working sons of toil and glad was he to witness the same determination that existed sixteen weeks ago to stand out until their full demands were acceded to. They had truth on their side, they spoke the truth, and their statements were never contradicted. They told the people of Sunderland what was the effect of their grievances, and they all agreed that they had been ignorant of them. He never was so confident of success as

he was in the week gone by. They all knew that the last kick was the greatest kick of all, and this the masters were beginning to exhibit. They must wait patiently, and they must be content to suffer a little more. If they could get to their real employers he believed they might then be at work. Let their motto be, "to conquer or die." They talked of starving them into compliance, but it could not be done. Whatever they did, let them stand firm ; never mind those few that had left them, and they might rest assured that they would triumph. He concluded by moving the following resolution :—"That, as the miners of these two counties have now struck work upwards of sixteen weeks, and having at various intervals offered to meet the owners, in order to come to some amicable arrangement, rather than risk the ruin of the trade, and though those overtures on our part have been met with insult and contempt, yet this meeting is of opinion that all unpleasantness of this kind should be forgotton, if they, the owners, would at the present time come forward and endeavour to adjust all differences."

Mr. Thomas Pratt, of Castle Eden, seconded the resolution. He said the weather was so very unfavourable that he would not detain them.—(Cries of "cheer up, and go on lad, never mind the rain.")—The first effort of the masters, he went on to say, was to stop the supplies by using their influence with the shopkeepers. They told them if they would only withdraw their support from the pitmen, they would be starved into compliance. They had had to concoct plans to support some of their more indigent brethren ; they had some funds in their Association at the commencement of the strike, but these were soon distributed to those who had not been prepared for the struggle. Many of them had been turned out of their houses and homes, and they were now living on their pledged goods, and he thought that it was the determination of every man present to pledge everything he had rather than give up this cause. He had known the aged and infirm to have been ejected from their houses ; and he knew one man, Henry Barrass, in his 80th year, with his wife in her 75th, turned out. The old man had worked on the collieries belonging to the Marquis of Londonderry, for 30 years. He thought he might say to the world—"hear this, you feeling part of mankind, and be astonished." Ought

not this old man to have had his house and fire free, with a reasonable pension to live on ? Two days ago the foundation stone of a monument was laid on Pensher Hill to the late Earl of Durham, in the presence of thirty thousand persons, the cost, exclusive of the stone which was given by the Marquis of Londonderry, being £3,000. If the marquis thought this noble deed should be recorded in history, let it also be recorded that Barrass was a working man, and had worked in his pits for thirty years, and that he was then, in his 80th year, houseless. (He, the speaker, then raised himself up and shouted at the highest pitch of his voice—"The day of retribution will come.") He urged every man to stand to his colours. The last week had not yet come, and should they lose their point, they would give them another rally after. The union should never die. The speaker resumed his seat amidst tremendous cheering, and the resolution was carried.

Mr. R. Archer, of South Hetton, proposed the next resolution. He said that he felt very unwell, and would not therefore detain them ; still he felt a pleasure in coming amongst them to lead them to the accomplishment of their object. It was a fact that the strike had now lasted for sixteen weeks, but they had not been without friends, and he hoped they were all prepared to keep the promise which this resolution pledged them to. They had received supplies from many quarters, and they ought to be grateful, and remember that "a friend in need is a friend indeed." He trusted that they would show that they had a disposition and a determination to keep to this promise.—(Cries of "we will!") If they had come into the field single-handed, let them bear in mind the truths they were endeavouring to advance. The public were watching their movements, and let them remember the precept inculcated by Scripture, —"Not the sayer of the law, but the doer of it shall be rewarded." If they said there that day what they would do, they should do it. He concluded by reading the resolution, as follows :—"That in the opinion of this meeting, our gratitude is due to those shopkeepers, and other friends, who have so kindly supported us in our present struggle, and we fully expect they will continue to do so, in order to enable us to discharge, in an honourable manner, all our

obligations, and at the same time to assist us in bringing the present struggle to a successful termination."

The chairman here announced that he had received a communication, informing him that two farmers in Bishop Middleham had contributed for the men employed in that colliery four rows of potatoes, which announcement was received with loud cheers.

Mr. T. Wakenshaw seconded, and Mr. T. Hay supported the resolution, which was ultimately carried unanimously.

Mr. Charles Reveley proposed the next resolution amid a shower of rain. He jokingly remarked that it was a very fine day and would make the potatoes grow. He was sorry to be under the necessity of proposing the resolution, still he considered it his duty to do so. He did not like to be the bearer of bad news, yet he thought the men ought to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Some miscreant had laid an information against the organ of their association, the *Miners' Advocate*. This was another blow of the enemy at their association, but would they suffer their paper to be thus put down ?—(Cries of "No, never.") No, he thought not, it would only make them support it the more, and exert themselves to make it a stamped paper. Would they do that ?—(Loud cries of "we will.") He hoped they would stand between the publisher and all danger ; in fact, he knew the association would do so. It was a working man's paper, therefore it was to be put down ; but the base informer would find it was not so easily put down as he imagined. He might say with the dramatist that—

> "'Tis a very goodworld to live in,
> To lend, or to spend, or to give in ;
> But to beg or to borrow, or to get a man's own,
> 'Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

They should look to themselves, support their paper, have no flinching, and they might depend the battle would ultimately be their's. He concluded by proposing the following resolution :—"That, in the opinion of this meeting, the prosecution commenced against the organ of this association, viz., the *Miners' Advocate,* is unjust, oppressive, and totally uncalled for ; inasmuch as the paper has reached its eighteenth number without being disturbed ;

it therefore shows a spirit of malice and vindictiveness unworthy of the age we live in. We, therefore, pledge ourselves to stand by and support that paper more firmly and energetically than hitherto, and to exert ourselves in making it a stamped paper as soon as possible :—

" For the more oppressors bind us,
The more united they shall find us."

Mr. William Bird, of East Cramlington, seconded the resolution. He said a writ had been issued, headed—" The Attorney General *versus* Dodds," against the printer of the *Miners' Advocate*, because it was not stamped. It was only a trades' paper, and did not contain general news, or meddle with politics or religion ; it had been established near a year and they had just found out that it was not stamped. Persecution generally defeated itself, and, instead of destroying the paper, it would do it good. He entreated them to stand by those who defended them, at all risks ; to give the paper their determined support, and recommend that it should be stamped immediately.

Mr. Joseph Fawcett, of West Moor, proposed the next resolution, and strongly urged them not to surrender their principles. Let them continue friendly and united, and they would become in the end triumphant. Let nothing induce them to leave their association.—(Cries of " never ! ")—He hoped not, it was their only shield of defence, their only hope. The resolution he proposed was :—" That, in the opinion of this meeting, the state of the markets (as the winter stock must of necessity be immediately got in), and the conduct of the masters in using so many schemes and plots to get them to work, warrants us in believing that fresh conditions will soon be offered ; and this meeting recommends every man to stand out, and no surrender."

Mr. Edward Smith, of South Hetton, seconded the resolution, which, like all the rest, was unanimously carried.

Mr. William Daniels proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor for the use of the Town Moor, and to the trades and shopkeepers for their support to the men, which was seconded and carried amid much cheering. After a vote of thanks to the chairman, three cheers loud and long for the union and Mr. Roberts were given, and the immense assemblage of men peacefully separated.

This was one of the largest meetings ever held by the miners up to that time, much larger than any on Shadon's Hill, large as many of them were. The *Tyne Mercury* stated that there could not be less than 30,000 on the ground at one time. A board was held up during the meeting, bearing the following inscription, on one side :—

> ' Stand firm to your union,
> Brave sons of the mine,
> And we'll conquer the tyrants
> Of Tees, Wear, and Tyne.'

On the reverse side :—

> ' We'll never leave the union field
> Until we make oppression yield.'

It ought to be stated that it rained heavily during the time of the procession and meeting, notwithstanding which the men continued unmoved in their ranks, and stood on the wet grass till the close of the proceedings ; a most convincing proof of their determination.

Another large district meeting was held at Bishop Auckland about the same time, when upwards of ten thousand men assembled. Mr. M. Elliot, from Trimdon, in the chair. Major Wemyss, of the police force, rode up to the platform, and, congratulating the men on their orderly and peaceful conduct on past occasions, hoped they would continue to conduct their meetings in the same orderly manner. The chairman assured him his advice would be attended to. The meeting was addressed by some of the most intelligent and energetic advocates of the miners' rights, Messrs. J. Wilson, J. Fawcett, R. Archer, G. Charlton, G. Emmerson, J. Beaston, N. Heslop and M. Dent. The resolutions, which were carried unanimously, were the same as those agreed to at the great meeting on the Town Moor.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONDITION OF THE MEN ON STRIKE. EFFORTS MADE TO RAISE FUNDS. SECESSION FROM THE RANKS OF THE UNION AND RETURN OF MEN TO WORK. YIELDING OF THE DURHAM MEN. MEETINGS ON THE TOWN MOOR, AT DURHAM, AND AT SCAFFOLD HILL.

Hundreds of the men on strike were at this time away in other parts of the country, some of them staying with their friends and relatives, some working in other places with their friends during the strike, whilst many who were travelling the country to collect subscriptions, grouped together in musical bands, met with harsh and unjust treatment which would have discouraged less zealous men than they were. Twelve of these musicians arrived in Whitehaven, from the County of Durham, the greater number being from Tanfield. They asked permission of the Rev. John Jenkins, chief magistrate of Whitehaven, to play through the town, but not to beg, and had permission at once accorded to them. On the Monday, July 1st, two benefit societies of miners held their anniversary, and paraded the streets with music ; but neither of these societies had the graciousness to employ the musicians out of the County of Durham. These men, ten in number, were one day playing in the street, the other two being on the alert to receive any donation that might be given them. They never went into any house, nor yet asked any person for anything, but suddenly one of them, a man of the name of Thomas Dixon, of South Shields, was taken into custody by police-sergeant Bell, brought before Mr. Robert Jefferson, and charged with begging in the street, a charge which the prisoner denied. The magistrates asked him where he came from, and who he was ; he told the magistrate that he belonged to the County of Durham, a miner, and out of employ for twelve weeks. The magistrate read the clause in the Act of Parliament, and said he was liable to 28 days, but he would only commit him to the House of Correction for 14 days. These poor men met with very few friends amongst men of their own calling ; but received better treatment from a few carpenters of the town, for, after playing a few airs, they presented them with 12s. and refreshments.

The owners had at length succeeded in getting a large number of hands from other parts of the country ; and the strike having continued 18 weeks, great numbers of the men began to break away from the ranks of the union and return to work. Several collieries refused to set their old hands on again, which caused them to besiege other collieries. Rumours now got abroad that the union was broken up ; and the men who had been brought down to starvation point and unable to endure the miseries of camping in tents or the cries of their children for bread, were compelled at length to yield to adverse circumstances. The Durham miners were the first to give way, but let it be understood that the pitmen of this county had suffered more hardship by the cruel treatment of their late employers, than their brethren in Northumberland. Besides, their resources failed, and want, in all its hideous forms, was present with them and their wretched families. The miners of Northumberland still felt resolute, for they were smarting under a great accumulation of wrongs, and they shuddered at the idea of returning to work under their employers' terms. They therefore determined to hold another general meeting on the Newcastle Town Moor, on the 13th of August, and recommended that their brethren of the Wear and Tees should do the same. A meeting accordingly took place, but there were only from ten to twelve hundred present at this meeting ; Mr. Charles Reveley in the chair. The following resolutions were unanimously passed :—Moved by Mr. James Hardy, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, and supported by Mr. Joseph Fawcett, " That after standing out 18 weeks, and seeing the base and unmanly conduct of our masters, who have, by promises, threats, and intimidation, succeeded in getting a number of men to work to suit their present purposes, and thereby entailing misery on the present and future generations, to prevent this direful calamity, this meeting therefore calls upon all such as have been deluded by the false promises of the masters, to join the ranks of the miners' association."—2nd, moved by Mr. W. Bell, seconded by Mr. William Bird, and supported by Mr. E. Richardson, " That in the opinion of this meeting, the miners of this district ought to be very careful and guarded against reports emanating from the parties in the garb of ministers of the

gospel, persuading the men to go to work, by painting our position in false colours; this meeting, therefore pledges itself not to believe any report unless it bear the stamp of authority from our association." Mr. Christopher Haswell, moved the third resolution :—" That this meeting pledges itself to stand by the association, and to continue united, until we obtain our rights." Thanks having been voted to the chairman and to Sir John Fife for the use of the ground, the meeting broke up.

A similar meeting to the above took place the day after, on the sands near the City of Durham, of the collieries of the Wear and Tees, about ten thousand being present. The same resolutions were passed, and the same chairman presided. The speakers were Messrs. Dent, Pratt and others. Great numbers of the Durham pitmen were making their way to the collieries on the Tyne; but the Northumberland miners still determined to hold out. An enthusiastic meeting of twenty-seven collieries of the Tyne was held on Scaffold Hill, when it was resolved to fight the battle out to the last. It was resolved to send two men from each of the Tyne collieries to the Wear and Tees, to endeavour to induce their brethren there to again join them in the battle for Labour's rights, and to advise them to stay away from the Tyne, but before the men got away to the different places to where they were appointed, hundreds of men had made their way to the Tyneside collieries, and took work wherever they could obtain it.

CHAPTER XX.

RESOLUTION OF THE MEN TO YIELD. RETURN OF THE MEN TO WORK. END OF THE STRIKE.

The battle which had been fought between capital and labour, between might and right, between the oppressors and the oppressed, was now drawing quickly towards a termination in favour of capital, of might, and of the oppressors. Labour, starved, ill-treated, scorned, and mocked at, felt the ground giving way from beneath its feet; right, crushed and stifled for the time by the force of might, lay bleeding and

humiliated ; and the oppressed, still more oppressed than ever with the miseries of their suffering dear ones, their wives and children, and with a keen and poignant sense of the great cruelty which had been perpetrated by their employers, felt the time for throwing off the yoke of slavery, had not yet arrived, and reluctantly yielded to the force of circumstances. Poverty and indigence, unable to cope with wealth and affluence, gave up the contest ; wrong triumphed, and right was defeated. The leaders of the men now, seeing there was no chance to hold out any longer, called meetings at the various collieries, at each of which the following resolution was passed :—" Seeing the present state of things, and being compelled to retreat from the field through the overbearing and cruelty of our employers, the suffering and misery of our families, and the treachery of those who have been their tools during the strike, we, at the present time, deem it advisable to make the best terms with our employers we can." A second resolution was passed to the effect that no single individual should go to the colliery office for work, but all go in a body and meet the resident viewer ; and after the binding, another meeting should be held.

This determination being come to on the Saturday at the collieries, on the Sunday the miners were all in a state of confusion. Few, if any slept that night, they were in mourning, many of them with tears in their eyes. On Monday morning, the men at Seaton Delaval Colliery met in a body at the Hastings Arms, and went to the colliery office. The head viewer, Mr. William Oliver, came out, and said :—" Now, lads, I suppose you request an interview with me ? " Their hearts seemed to be too full to answer. He said : " I know what conclusions you have come to. You mean to commence work on the employers' terms. Well, things will be just as they were before you left off work, with the exception of the monthly bond." He expressed a strong desire that all bad feeling would be laid aside, for both had enough to do, and he hoped that this would be the last strike between the miners and their employers. It was agreed that all men who had been off should be at liberty to return to their work as soon as pit room could be got, and that every man should have his own house again as far as it could conveniently be carried out. As there had been a

large number of men brought to the colliery, who occupied the houses, these of course could not be shifted. After a few more friendly observations the binding commenced, and when all was agreed to, they returned to their meeting room, and it was unanimously agreed to still stand by their union. Similar meetings at the East Cramlington, Seghill, West Moor, and the other collieries, took place, and the same resolutions were passed at each.

The strike of the miners of the North of 1844, a strike which still lives in the memory of many, and which for magnitude and the determination of the men, has never yet been surpassed, was now at an end, and the men were compelled by sheer necessity to return to work on the terms and conditions offered by the coal owners. This trial of strength between the workmen and their masters did not originate in consequence of a mere question of wages, but to settle the future terms of labour, and to rectify a number of abuses to which the unfortunate operatives were victims, for the miners were compelled to submit to every injury and insult, oppression and injustice, cruelty and annoyance. They adopted the only means in their power to assert their rights and obtain redress, and they were laughed at, trampled on, and insulted by the tyrants who had wronged them. Every method to persecute, destroy, and crush them, was adopted by such men as Lord Londonderry and his confererates. The very tradesmen on the estates of those feudal barons who dared to give credit, or even supply food for cash to the miners who had joined the union, were the victims of oppression. The condition of the unfortunate miners became too desperate to be supported, although the cause was justice itself. Moralists and religionists assure us, that virtue always triumphs in the long run ; here is a case which appears to belie the doctrine. But an imperious necessity compelled them to give way to their severe task masters ; for they had no alternative between that, and seeing their wives and little ones perish with starvation. The strike is over. Arbitrary power and immense wealth proved stronger than the courage excited by a good cause. In fact, justice itself was trampled under foot by aristocratic tyranny, aided by unlimited riches. Thousands and thousands of unfortunate men were driven by a stern necessity

back again to a condition of abhorrent slavery. But this victory achieved by the coal owners was only another item to swell the awful catalogue of wrongs for which a proud aristocracy will shortly have to account for to a democracy, rising in its power and its might, when the day of retribution shall come.

CHAPTER XXI.

REPRISALS OF THE MEN ON THE STRANGERS. RIOTS AT SEATON DELAVAL AND HOLYWELL. ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT OF THE MEN. TREATMENT OF THE WELSHMEN BY THE NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM PITMEN.

Although the men had lost the strike it was acknowledged by many of the coal owners that in consequence of the losses they had sustained during its progress, it would have been better for them to have given the men the price they had asked for at first ; but as they had a union amongst themselves, one could not agree without the whole. The loss to the district by this strike was estimated at half a million sterling. According to a return published at the time, the following were the numbers of miners employed in April in the several districts. The Tyne 15,556 ; Blyth 1,051 ; Wear 13,172 ; Tees 4,211 ; total 33,990.

The soldiers who had been located at Seaton Delaval during the greater part of the strike still remained for some time after matters had been adjusted between the men and the owners. The men who had been out on strike and those who had been at work during the strike as "blacklegs," never met on friendly terms, and the former gave indications that they would take the first opportunity to have a day of reckoning with the latter for their conduct while the strike was pending. During the twenty weeks the strike continued there was little, if any, breaking of the peace. On the 11th of August, however, a brakesman belonging to Ravensworth, named Thomas Robson, was shot dead in a field near to that place whilst in company with a watcher named Jefferson, and though it was believed the crime was connected with the strike, the perpetrator was never discovered. On the 15th August the greatest riot that took place at this time occurred. The way in which it originated was this. The

Double Row in Seaton Delaval was then all occupied by Welshmen or men who had been at work during the strike. Two of the Welshmen went from this row to the Hastings Arms Inn, then kept by Mr. Bell, with a stone bottle, locally known as a "grey hen," to get it filled with beer. They were met by two Northumberland pitmen, and a fight commenced between them. In the course of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour hundreds of men had drawn together—including English, Welsh, and Irish, and a fair pitched battle commenced, all present arming themselves with whatever they could get hold of. They tore off the garden railings, got pick shafts, and in fact anything that was easily portable, or that would deal a blow. The fight had not continued long before every lane leading towards Delaval was thronged with reinforcements from other collieries. Mr. Atkinson, the underviewer, came up amongst them and tried to make peace; at which time picks and stones were flying in all directions. Mr. Atkinson had a little favourite cocker dog, which followed him into the crowd, when a pick thrown by some one fell at Mr. Atkinson's feet and went right through the dog into the ground. Mr. Atkinson at once ran off to the farm where the soldiers were billeted and gave orders for them to come out, asserting that if they did not every man would be murdered on the road. The officer in the command of the military refused to take his men on to the scene of action, saying that his men should not stir till the riot act was read. A dispatch was then sent off to Shields for a magistrate to read the riot act. Within less than an hour from the commencement of the affray there were thousands of men upon the ground, all of them labouring under great excitement and passion. The Welshmen now began to yield, and finally fled in numbers, making their escape over the railway, down behind the hedges, and so into the houses where they were living. Rumours were raised on all sides that the soldiers and police were coming out, and but for this, beyond all doubt the Englishmen would have followed and destroyed both them and their houses, so greatly were they exasperated against them. As it was, great numbers were wounded and severely injured on both sides, but more particularly on the part of the Welshmen. None, however, were killed. During

the following week the police arrested large numbers of the combatants, the Northumberland miners being selected, of course, in the impartiality of the law ; their mode of taking them into custody being to go into the houses of those against whom they had a case when they were in bed, and, raising them from their slumber, secure and handcuff them. When they had got them thus secured they marched them off to the stables of the colliery farm, where they kept them till the morning, when they were taken to Shields for magisterial examination. They were conveyed in a long cart, with cavalry soldiers and police marching before, behind, and at each side of them, and were driven through Seaton Terrace, Holywell, Earsdon, and thence to Shields. The inhabitants of the villages on the line of route became much excited, and when the imposing cavalcade arrived at Shields it created a great deal of excitement, hundreds of persons turning out to see ten poor pitmen in a cart, all handcuffed to each other and thus rendered thoroughly helpless and harmless, guarded with a force of soldiers and police that would have been sufficient if they had had all the miners in Northumberlond in charge. The ten pitmen thus dealt with were John Padinson, Thomas Robson, William Gardner, William Garrat, William Richardson, George Giles, Thomas Colins, Robert Laws, David Robson, John Miller.

The rioting thus commenced, spread like an infection, and scarcely had that at Seaton Delaval been properly quelled, when another broke out at East Holywell. Here the men who had been put in to supply the places of the men on strike were principally Irishmen, and it was amongst these that the rioting mostly occurred. This disturbance, however, was not so extensive and serious as that at Seaton Delaval, but there was more injury done to the " blacklegs." Seven men were taken prisoners for this riot, including one man who was arrested at Seghill for breaking a man's arm ; but the man who was taken was not the person who had really committed the offence. Such riots as those at Delaval and Holywell accorded with the ideas of certain individuals, who often wanted to break the peace during the strike, and settle the difference by an appeal to brute force. If such had been done, they contended, the " blacklegs "

would never have been introduced in sufficient strength to be of any service to the coal owners.

The masters who had got their turn served by the Welshmen left them to the tender mercies of the men whom they had helped to keep out of employment, and though it is not to the credit of the unionists, still in all fairness it must be recorded that the manner in which they treated those poor wretches was such that had the ill-treatment occurred during the strike they would have been transported for it without much compunction. The reins of government were taken out of the hands of the leaders, since the strike was now at an end, and the men, feeling in no way responsible to any authority, in many instances gave way to their revengeful passions to an inordinate extent. In the mines all manner of tricks were played on these poor strangers in order to punish them. Great numbers of the Welshmen had sons working in the pits as trappers, drivers, putters, and hewers ; and the boys of the union men never lost an opportunity of upbraiding them with being " blacklegs." But unfortunately they did not stop here, for these little ones were subject to a great deal of ill-usage, such as having clay, candle grease, dirty water, and coal dust thrown in their faces, or having their candles knocked out, and being left in the dark for hours in the mine. The bigger boys who were engaged in driving were subjected to the unpleasant results of such tricks as pulling the plates up, or laying timber across the road where they had to pass along, or the extinction of their candles. But the putters who were engaged to bring the tubs from the hewers to the drivers, had a more miserable life of it still, and what is usually called a " mother gate board," afforded their persecutors an ample opportunity of playing a mischievous and withal dangerous prank upon them. This " mother gate board " is a main road leading from the other parts of the workings to the flat, mostly on a steep incline. The trick was to suspend a rope across the main way from one prop to the other, letting it swag a little in the middle. As it was usual for the putter to come down at great speed with his head above the tub, the rope, hanging down across the tramway, caught them in their faces, and often threw them on to their backs. This was a severe punishment, and so terrified the

poor fellows that they were compelled to go double behind the tub in order to escape the traps that were laid for them. But worse still was the practice of defrauding them of their earnings, for as their " tokens " were put on to the outside of the tubs it often happened that hundreds were taken off and thrown away ; so that they often found, to their exceeding chagrin, when they came to bank, that after having put up with all the abuse and ill-treatment in the mine they had got little or nothing for working all day. The hewers who were working " in the face " had their tokens taken off and thrown away and stones thrown amongst the coals they had hewn, so that they would be lost to them by the overlooker laying them out. Whenever there was a chance their clothes were stolen from them out of the working place, and they had frequently to go home without any clothes after being hard at work all the shift ; whilst in many instances their working gear, picks, drills, &c., were stolen and thrown into the old workings ; there being hundreds hurled down the old pits at Cramlington, Delaval, and Seghill.

These poor wretches' lives at length became as bad as that of a toad under a harrow. At the week's end they never dared to make their appearance in any of the public-houses to enjoy themselves, for if ever one of them was bold enough to venture in, he was sure to come in for a share of the debt that the union men had long promised to pay them. The men at the collieries, as a rule, and more particularly at Seaton Delaval, would not descend or ascend with any of the " blacklegs." It was no use of them complaining to the masters of any ill-treatment, for they got little or no satisfaction if they did so. They began to think that the masters having got their services out of them, now left them to fight for themselves ; and, as there was no chance of making peace, large numbers of them began to leave, till at length all were gone with the exception of one or two. One of the Welshmen remained at Seaton Delaval after all the rest had gone, and though he was punished terribly he put up with it all. He was accused by the Welshmen as having been the cause of their coming to the north, it being asserted that he was sent by them to see if there was a strike and that he had been got hold of by the masters and paid a large sum of money to bring

a number of fellow-workmen into Durham and Northumberland. Whether this was true or not, it is certain he was always regarded with suspicion and distrust, and though he worked for 20 years at Seaton Delaval, his company was never tolerated by the native pitmen.

A fatal and shocking accident occurred to another of these poor Welshmen at Seghill, who was known by the name of "Blind Davy," owing to his being very near-sighted. He had been working while the men were on strike, and when they returned to their work he went one night on to the pit heap to descend before they came. He had seven or eight picks on his back, and with these he went right to the pit mouth, fell to the bottom, and was killed. It was customary for the furnaceman to descend before the pit "hung on" each morning, in order to fill the small coal that had fallen to the bottom of the shaft from the corves during the time the pit had been at work on the previous day. He went down as usual, and not observing the body lying before him he began to fill, when he found some heavy resistance against his shovel. Putting his hand down he discovered it was the body of a man. He went and brought some men who were working not far off, and taking the body up and looking at it, one remarked, "what a bad job, poor fellow." The old furnaceman said, "well, it might have been worse." On the other asking him what he meant, he answered, "it might have been one of our own men. He is only a Welshman, he is weel out of the way." This instance is recorded as an evidence of the feeling which existed between the North Countrymen and the Welshmen, and shows how a man's natural feelings of humanity may be perverted by the passions generated by these strikes.

Great numbers who had been camping in lanes during the strike, and after its settlement, now removed to the colliery houses vacated by the strangers who had left; but here and there, some who had been refused work, remained encamped. One man, in particular, who was not refused work, and who had a house offered him to go into, preferred living in the hut he had built for himself and family. He was a miner belonging to Seaton Delaval, of the name of Moseby, and had built a sod hut in the Irish fashion when

turned out of his cottage. It was well secured against wet and weather, and had glass windows, with a proper front and back entrance. He remained in it a long time after the settlement of the strike, and worked at the colliery. It was situated between the head of Foreman's Row and Stickley's Farm, where there is a wide space of ground on the roadside between the hedge and the turnpike road, and which he contended no one had any more right to than himself. Had the owners not interfered, those who belonged to the ground would have had some difficulty in getting him off ; so determined was he to continue in the occupation of his primitive residence.

CHAPTER XXII.

TREATMENT OF THE LEADERS OF THE LATE STRIKE. RECOMMENCEMENT OF THE UNION AGITATION. FRESH MEETINGS HELD ALL OVER THE TWO COUNTIES. THE MEETING AT WRECKINGTON. MEN DISCHARGED FOR ATTENDING THE MEETINGS. DISPUTE AMONGST THE MASTERS.

Though the collieries on the Tyne, Wear, and Tees had now generally resumed operation there were a few of the pits in various parts of the two counties that were completely laid off, and did not again commence working. The large numbers of men caused by these pits being laid in, and the extensive importation of strangers during the strike, glutted the labour market for a time, and enabled the owners to pick and choose from amongst their old servants. All did not meet the miners as the Delaval head viewer had done, and numbers were refused work, generally those who had been most active, and had taking a leading part in the late strike. Mr. Christopher Haswell, Jun., who was, previous to and during the strike, a member of the executive council of the National Association, was an instance of this treatment. He lived in the house with his father and three brothers at Seghill Colliery ; and when they went to apply for work, the master agreed to find work for them all with the exception of Christopher. He travelled to several collieries in the two counties and tried to get work but was refused, and the men of Seghill Colliery decided to employ

him in the powder store, to deal out powder and candles to them. Being a single man at the time, he still lived in the house with his father ; but the masters not having been able to drive him away, gave old Christopher and his sons a month's notice to quit the colliery. Young Christopher went to Scotland, thinking that his father and brothers would not be further disturbed ; but such was not the case, for the notice was enforced, and they were thrown out of work. They travelled round a great number of collieries in the two counties, and in many places, though men were wanted they would not give them employment when they told their names, the answer always being " we cannot give you work." It was evident the name was on the " black books," and a particular friend of the old man's advised him if he wanted work in the two counties to change his name, as he knew many men working at places under another name. The old man, who was very conscientious, and a strict Methodist, said " I was named Christopher Haswell when I came into the world, and will be Christopher Haswell till I go out of it." This was often quoted in pointing out the honesty of old Mr. Haswell.

Charlaw Colliery was at this time advertising for men, and he ultimately succeeded in getting work for himself and family there. After he had been there a considerable time the head viewer of Seghill meeting him one day, said he hoped that things were all passed now. And then he asked him to return to Seghill, promising to give him and his sons employment. He particularly asked after Christopher, who had been the cause of the father and sons leaving Seghill, and said " send to Scotland for him and I will give him employment, for I respect you and your sons for your honesty." The old man liking Northumberland better than the County of Durham, shifted back and remained at Seghill till he died. Christopher, who when in Scotland got married, brought his wife with him and lived at Seghill as long as the owners had the colliery.

Numbers of the leading men put up with great hardships before they got employed ; some never went back to the pits, whilst others got situations at distant collieries. Indeed this was not the worst of the hardships that the leaders of this eventful strike had to put up with, for both

they and their families were not only prevented getting employment and nearly starved in consequence of the active and zealous manner in which they had laboured through the strike for their fellow-men, but even the men forgot themselves and their benefactors, and not only repaid them with scant gratitude but often with positive insult.

The union now became very weak, a large number of the collieries giving it up altogether. Those who had pawned their feather beds, watches, clocks, rings, and every article they could conveniently dispose of, or who had stood bond for certain amounts of goods for those who stood in most need of it, now found themselves placed in a critical position.

Martin Jude, who had scarcely been mentioned during the whole strike, bitterly opposed it at the commencement, but when it was once begun no one laboured harder, and more earnestly than he did while it lasted. He was the great general, at the head in the private counsels. He now raised himself up in greater vigour, and urged the men never to give up the union. In 1845 the conference was sitting in Newcastle, and it was resolved to hold a series of public meetings in the two counties. Large placards were accordingly printed announcing that a number of meetings would be held on the Tyne and Wear on Monday, July 7th.

West Cramlington held their meeting at Botany Bay, a short distance from the colliery. The speakers were Messrs. Hardy, Scott, and Durò, from Derbyshire. Another meeting was held on Scaffold Hill, Mr. J. Fawcett in the chair ; the speakers were Mr. Welsby, from Lancashire ; Mr. Anty, from Yorkshire ; and W. P. Roberts, Esq., the miners' attorney. At this meeting it was agreed to hold a general meeting either on the Town Moor, or Shadon's Hill. At a meeting held at Sheriff Hill, Martin Jude was chairman, and the speakers were Embledon, Holgate, and Price. A resolution was passed in favour of holding a general meeting of the Tees, Wear, and Tyne men at some central place. Another meeting was held at Coxhoe on the 8th July, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. Swallow and Daniels, urging the miners to join the union ; whilst a gathering of the miners of Derwent Iron Works took place on Black Hill on the 10th July ; the chairman being Mr. James

Hardy, and the speakers, Messrs. Price and Duro. On the 16th another meeting was held at Walker, addressed by Mr. Daniels ; and Mr. Embleton, during the month, addressed meetings at Black Hill, Berry Edge, Seaton Burn, and West Cramlington. A camp meeting in favour of the union was held on Sunday, the 27th, at Scaffold Hill, and addressed by Davis, Embleton, Mycroft, and Wakinshaw. Another meeting of a similar character was held at Botany Bay, near West Cramlington, on the 10th August, addressed by Messrs. Swallow, Embleton, Davis, and Smith, from Leicestershire.

A meeting at Wreckington took place on the 25th, of the men of Springwell, of the King and Fanny, Sheriff Hill, and Washington pits. At this gathering, Mr. Hammond, a veteran pitman, was in the chair. He said that during his long life he had been opposed to injustice, and wherever oppression raised its brazen front he would be there to oppose it. The pitmen were an oppressed body of men. The newspapers had stated they wanted a strike, he denied it. He thought past experience would show the folly of strikes, and the evils resulting therefrom.

Mr. James Hardy next addressed the meeting. He said they had come to try to persuade the men to act together, to try to stop that internal war which was committing so much devastation amongst them. Let them act like brethren to each other, for the masters had power enough without the men lending them theirs. Men were working against each other, but let not the strong man imagine that the Almighty had given him his physical powers to be abused. No, if he violated the laws of nature, nature in the end would punish him. Men's overworking caused a reduction of score price—of which he gave several instances—and he was convinced that there was never more need of their being united. He did not want to see them in battle array against their masters, he wanted them to unite to benefit themselves ; to cultivate a spirit of love, and to relieve the sick and unfortunate, which was one of the objects of the Miners' Association. He then introduced the question of ventilation, the Haswell misfortune, and went into a long statement in order to show the oppressions practised amongst miners, during which he stated that some masters were turning men off for merely attending a meeting.

Mr. Duro, from Derbyshire, next addressed the meeting. He spoke long on the benefits of union and the restriction of labour. He was very severe on the local press for misrepresenting the proceedings of the pitmen, as well as on the masters for turning men off for attending meetings. By this, he said, they thought they would stop the men from taking any part in the union ; whilst, at the same time, they enjoyed the privilege of union themselves. He contended that the working men had as much right to join together to protect their labour, as the employers had to protect their capital.

Mr. Daniel also addressed the meeting, and alluded to the masters discharging men for attending meetings, which he characterized as an extremely harsh and unjust procedure. He proved that according to the 5th and 6th of Geo. IV., their meetings and union were perfectly legal as long as they abstained from intimidation. That Act stated that no person should be subject to any pains or penalties, or suffer any punishment for attending such meetings, but the masters, having more power than the Queen, the Lords, and the Commons, thought differently, for they discharged a man, and thus subjected him and his family to many privations, perhaps to want ; and that he thought was punishing with a vengeance. He said that this plan would not avail them in the end, they had a good cause, and that cause would rather be advanced than retarded by oppression. But to such an extent was the turning of the men off for attending meetings carried, that they became fairly terrified, and they had great difficulty in getting men to act as delegates, or take any part in the union, because men knew that to do so was tantamount to dismissal.

When the speakers had addressed the assemblage and the resolutions had been carried, the meeting separated in a peaceable manner.

At this time a happy event for the miners took place, being no other than a dispute among the coal owners resulting from the late strike in 1844. The coal owners had a rule in their association for fixed quantities of coal to be wrought at each colliery, and a fine was levied upon the firms which vended more than the stipulated quantity, whilst others who had not worked the fixed amount, were allowed to make up the quantity the next year. In consequence of

the strike of 1844 the work in some collieries was quite suspended; and the "shorts" on the 31st March, 1845, were 475,973 tons, whilst at the other places where the mines had been kept in operation, the "overs" were 199,163 tons. By a fixed fine on "overs," the amount due from those owners where the excess had been worked was £18,789; but the committee proposed to commute this sum for £11,273, and divide it amongst the collieries having "shorts." Neither party being satisfied by this proposition the regulations were abolished. By this decision there came to be a greater demand for men, and the persecution of the acting men of the strike was now almost at an end.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EMPLOYERS AGAIN UNITED. AWAKENING OF PUBLIC SYMPATHY WITH THE MEN. ACTION TAKEN FOR PARLIAMENTARY REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

The coal owners, however, who laboured so hard to prevent unity amongst the men were much too prudent to remain long separated, and very soon therefore peace was patched up between the contending parties. In the meantime the agents of the miners had been travelling all over England, Scotland, and Ireland, advocating the cause of the men, laying their grievances before the public, and inducing the public, with more or less of success, to take up their quarrel and to feel interested in their behalf. One of the first efforts of the masters after they had made up their quarrel was to make arrangements for the purpose of opposing any measures that were likely to come before Parliament in the interest of the men, and to send deputations to London to watch the proceedings afterwards.

It was different with the men. Instead of being so firmly united as they ought to have been they were very much the reverse, and instead of closely watching the proceedings in Parliament, where measures affecting their interests might have been looked for, they took no interest in the doings of the legislature, the men having been broken in spirit and the leaders having been so much abused by the masters and the local press. As an evidence of the vitu-

peration which was poured out on the devoted heads of the leaders by a portion of the press the following quotation from the *Newcastle Journal*, of the 12th July, 1845, may be quoted :—

" The annual conference of delegates of the miners' association commenced its sittings in this town on Monday, at a beer-shop kept by one of the delegates named Martin Jude. It was prudently resolved to exclude reporters, least the constituents of these delegates should become acquainted with their proceedings. It is understood, however, that the first subject of discussion was furnished by Mr. Jude himself who refused to ' score the pints,' or fill the pewter, till satisfied as to the mode of payment, there being, it was stated, ' a long score ' standing on the old account. An arrangement was finally effected by a cheque on the consolidated fund. When this difficulty had been got rid of, the delegates proceeded to develope their plan for another strike of the pitmen of Northumberland and Durham. The delegates have since been continuing their sittings at Martin Jude's, where they will of course remain till the ' consolidated fund ' evaporates in the evanescent fumes of ' beer and bacca.' The magistrates of the County of Durham have determined to act with promptitude and decision in the event of any attempt being made to create disturbances in the colliery districts, and the number of the military has been augmented by accession from the neighbouring garrisons."

Martin Jude wrote in reply :—

" The worthy editor of the above paragraph has been twice whipped for detailing personal slander in his paper, yet as the poor gentleman has to please his masters to obtain a little bread for his wife and family, it is impossible for him to refrain from following the occupation he was hired for, viz., ' that of throwing cold water on any movements of the working classes to better their condition.' But as Burns says :—

> ' Folks mun dae something for their bread,
> And sae mun death.'

The union of the miners of Northumberland and Durham was only living out a miserable existence in 1847, and shortly after this it became a total wreck. Martin Jude, who had always stood true to his post, and had carried out a great agitation almost single handed, as far as the miners of Northumberland and Durham were concerned, now laboured hard in getting signatures to the following petition for the appointment of inspectors and the better ventilation of mines, which was drawn up on behalf of the miners and sent to Mr. T. S. Duncombe, M.P., for presentation to the House of Commons in April, 1847.

To the Honourable the House of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the Colliers whose names are hereunto subscribed ;

Humbly Sheweth,—That your Petitioners are Colliers, working in the Coal Mines in the Coal Districts of England, Wales, and Scotland.

That they have seen and heard with great satisfaction that several laws have been passed of late years to better the condition of working men in different trades, and for their own and their children's protection and safety from injury and accident, and to assist in the improvement of their minds and habits. And your petitioners with great confidence submit to your Honourable House that the colliers have at no time in no wise been behind hand in honesty, peaceful conduct, and loyalty, and they therefore approach your Honourable House in the full hope that they will receive from your Honourable House consideration and attention. Your petitioners believe that much may be done by Judicious Laws for the benefit of your petitioners and the colliers in general, without wrong or injury to any one.

Your petitioners desire to direct the attention of your Honourable House to the many deaths continually happening from bad ventilation in the mines, and also to the distressing accidents which still more frequently occur from the same cause, and from which your petitioners are put to heavy expenses and lose their work for long periods of time ; but which accidents unfortunately for your petitioners do not come before the public, unless they occasion death. In many mines the air courses are not made with sufficient care, nor attended to with sufficient vigilance and caution ; in many the air has to travel too long a distance from the down-cast shaft to the up-cast shaft ; in many there is great neglect by the underlookers and others whose duty it is to look after the mines and colliers ; air doors are broken where they ought to be perfect—open when they ought to be shut—in some cases sheets have been hung up instead of doors—and many other neglects occur from over confidence caused by previous freedom from accident. Your petitioners admit that many of your petitioners have been neglectful and over confident ; but they are many of them very poor, and their position with their masters does not often allow them to speak freely of facts as they really are.

That your petitioners have heard, and many of them know it to be true, that great good has been effected in cotton factories from the appointment of Inspectors, and by the provisions for railing off machinery, and to prevent neglect and accidents, and they submit that some similar plan for the miners would do much in guarding against danger and accident.

Your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that Inspectors should be appointed to visit all the mines, and that some of these Inspectors should be men practically acquainted with colliery work ; that such Inspector should see that accurate maps are made of all the workings in the mines ; that these Inspectors should grant licences to mines where they consider that due provision and care have been used to prevent accidents and ensure good ventilation ; and that

without such Licenee no mine should be permitted to work. That penalties of One Hundred Pounds at the least, should be inflicted in case of any deviation from the orders of such Inspector, and that such penalties should be paid half by the landlord, and half by the tenant of the mine, and should form a fund for the support of the families of those who die from explosions or other accidents in the mines. Your petitioners submit that small fines in these cases are not felt and are no use whatever.

Your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that the appointment of Inspectors would not only ensure a better system of ventilation, but would also remove or lessen many other causes of death—such as roofs falling—water rushing in—defective chains, and engines. These and many other instances of want of due caution would become much less frequent if proper Inspectors were appointed to visit the mines, and were invested with sufficient power to enforce a compliance with their directions ; such Inspectors giving no notice of their intention to visit the mines, and at all times going there when they were not expected.

Your petitioners have heard that the Government of the country have been and are endeavouring to discover some plan by which accidents from bad air may be altogether prevented in mines. But your petitioners fear that such discovery will be very difficult and distant, if not altogether beyond the power of man. And your petitioners are well aware, and they submit to your Honourable House, that accident from sudden and unlooked for accumulations of bad air are not so frequent as has been represented, but that in almost in all cases it would appear on inquiry that it was known for some time before that there was bad air and that there was danger. And your petitioners believe from long observation that for every one accident which could not be foreseen nor guarded against, fifty at least happen which might have been prevented by proper precaution. And your petitioners believe that no laws or rules that your Honourable House could make would ensure good ventilation or proper care, unless Inspectors were appointed to see such Rules and Laws attended to.

Your petitioners have observed with much satisfaction the laws compelling the masters in factories to provide some amount of education for the children who work there, and your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that a similar plan would be of great use to the children of colliers. Unless your Honourable House assist your petitioners in carrying out this wish, that their children may be educated, not one in a hundred of the generation of colliers now growing up will be able to write or read. As the colliers are placed—and your Honourable House will, on consideration, see the truth of this assertion—the difficulty of obtaining education for their children is much greater than ever it was for the parents of factory children.

Your petitioners inform your Honourable House that many accidents occur in the mines from persons being entrusted with the care of the engines who have served no regular apprenticeship and are incompetent for the work. Your petitioners submit that no person ought to be so entrusted until he has served a regular apprenticeship

of at least three years, and is twenty-one years of age, and has been examined by an Inspector and received a certificate of his been fully qualified—many valuable lives would be saved if a law were made to that effect.

Your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that a Public Registry should be kept of the owners and tenants of mines, and that before a mine is licensed, such owners and tenants should sign a declaration that they would do all in their power to enforce the laws for the good management of their mines, and the protection of the lives of the colliers ; and that they would attend at all times and give evidence and information when required by the Inspectors or by magistrates. At present in cases of complaint it frequently happens that no one knows who is the proper and responsible person to apply to.

Your petitioners ask your Honourable House to inquire into the truck system, and the manner in which the law made for the purpose of putting down that system is evaded. Many colliers in Scotland and in other parts are, by various ingenious contrivances, compelled to submit to this system, and cannot protect themselves from it. And your petitioners submit that a person offending against the laws for the abolition of truck ought to be tried as a criminal, and punished with a degrading punishment ; and not suffered to be discharged on paying a fine.

Your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that much misery and loss is occasioned by the system of paying colliers' wages at long intervals ; one consequence is that the collier is obliged to purchase his goods from the truck shop. Your petitioners ask your Honourable House to make a law that wages should be paid every week, or at not greater intervals than once a fortnight. Your petitioners gratefully acknowledge the good effected by the law against payment of wages in beershops ; and the law which they now ask for, would, they assure your Honourable House, be equally beneficial in its operation. And your petitioners assure your Honourable House that such a law would go further than any other remedy to do away with the truck system.

Your petitioners also ask your Honourable House to make a law that the colliers shall be paid for their work by weight and not by measure. It has been found most satisfactory to coal masters and the public to sell and buy their coals by weight and not by measure ; and your petitioners assure your Honourable House that payment by weight is much more fair for all parties than by measure. And your petitioners also ask your Honourable House to enact in the same laws that coals may be weighed by beams and scales, as that mode of weighing is less likely to be wrong, and would give more satisfaction.

Your petitioners humbly pray your Honourable House to take the matters of this petition into your consideration, and to pass such laws as to your Honourable House shall seem just and proper to carry into effect the wishes of your petitioners. And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Martin Jude next turned his attention to getting up statistics of accidents in mines through fire-damp, and, in writing to Mr. Duncombe, he says :—" I have known many hundreds of our fellow-men launched into eternity, where, if better regulations had been adopted in mines regarding ventilation the country would not have been startled with such catastrophies as there have occurred, and which are still liable to happen at the present day unless the public takes the question up and enforces Parliamentary legislation on the subject, as the masters say they have done all they can do."

The public were now beginning to feel some interest in the cause of the miners, and to take the trouble to consider their complaints, a thing which they would not even do previously. Writers in the press began to discuss the merits, or otherwise, of their grievances, and the local poet thus paraphrases the pitmen's appeal :—

Think on us hinnies, if you please,
An' it war but to show yor pity ;
For a' the toils and tears it gi'es
To warm the shins o' Lunnun City.

The fiery " blast " cuts short wor lives,
And steeps wor hyems in deep distress ;
Myeks widows o' wor canny wives,
And a' wor bairns leaves faitherless.

The wait'ry " wyest," mair dreadful still,
Alive oft barries huz belaw ;
Oh dear ! it myeks wor blood run chill,
May we sic mis'ry nivver knaw.

To be cut off frae kith and kin,
The leet o' day te see ne mair,
And left, frae help and hope shut in,
To pine and parish in despair.

If ye could on'y tyek a view,
And see the sweet frae off us poorin'—
The daily dangers we gan through,
The daily hardships we're endurin !

Ye wad send doon, aw ha'e ne doubt,
Some chaps on what they call a " mission,"
Te try if they could ferret out
Somethin' to better wor condition.

The following statistics furnished by Martin Jude to Mr. Duncombe, will show the number of men killed at a few

of the collieries in Northumberland and Durham, during the few years for which they are given :—

DATE.	COLLIERY.	CAUSE.	LIVES LOST.
Sept., 1817	Jarrow	Explosion	6
April, 1820	do.	do.	2
Jan., 1826	do.	do.	34
Mar., 1828	do.	do.	8
Aug., 1830	do.	do.	42
Nov., 1836	do.	do.	2
Aug., 1845	do.	do.	41
		Total	135
Aug., 1817	Wallsend	Explosion	4
Oct., 1821	do.	do.	52
Oct., 1832	do.	do.	1
June, 1835	do.	do.	102
Dec., 1838	do.	do.	11
		Total	170
May, 1812	Felling	Explosion	92
Dec., 1813	do.	do.	24
Oct., 1821	do.	do.	6
May, 1822	do.	do.	1
June, 1847	do.	do.	6
		Total	129
May 30, 1826	Townley	Explosion	38
Nov. 20, 1828	Washington	do.	14
Jan. 28, 1836	Hetton	do.	20
Jun. 28, 1839	Hilda, So. Shields	do.	50
Sep. 28, 1844	Haswell	do.	95
May 3, 1815	Heaton	Inundation	75
		Total	292

The explosion at Felling Colliery was one of the most terrific, if not the most fatal on record. Though it occurred in May, it was not till the 17th or 18th of July—six weeks after—that access could be gained to the workings, nor were the whole of the bodies removed before September, four months after the explosion. An obelisk to commemorate the sad event was erected in Heworth churchyard, and on

its four faces brass plates were inserted, containing the names of the 91 men and boys who had lost their lives.

The miners found a firm friend in Mr. T. S. Duncombe, who then represented the Borough of Finsbury.—"Something must be done," said he, "to protect the miners from the dreadful effects of explosions in mines;" and he did all he could to get a measure introduced into the House of Commons for that purpose. In Lord Ashley, Mr. Duncombe found a very useful and active assistant in the work, and the latter in writing on the subject said:—"I will lose no opportunity of pressing on Her Majesty's Government the necessity of attending to the ventilation of mines." The following is a copy of the letter sent to Mr. Daniels, of Newcastle, by Mr. T. S. Duncombe:—

Dear Sir,—On Friday last I put a question to the Government upon the subject of the dangerous state of the mines arising from bad ventilation, and in some places from inundations of water, and inquired whether any objection existed to a Commission issuing, for the purpose of inquiring into that important subject; also into the allegation that women are employed in coal-pits; also into the practice of keeping back men's wages for some weeks instead of paying them weekly, whereby an encouragement was given to the iniquitous system of "truck." I am sorry to see that the morning papers have given no report whatever, either of the question, or Sir James Graham's answer. The cause of their silence I am unable to conjecture, but I give you the substance of his reply:—1st, That as the Government were about to issue a commission for the purpose of inquiring into the alleged unhealthy nuisances in large towns, composed of Professor Faraday, Dr. Playfair, and Sir Henry Delabiche, all scientific men, he promised that they should also inquire into and report upon the question of a better ventilation of mines, and, he added, that of danger from flooding. 2nd, He promised that the illegal employment of women should be inquired into by other competent authorities, as also the system of truck, and that wherever it could be proved to exist, the parties guilty of it should be prosecuted at the public expense, and an example made of them. I think you will agree with me, that the course the Government are about to pursue is very satisfactory, and is as much as we could at present expect; therefore, the numerous petitions which I have had the honour to present, I do not think have altogether failed in the object the petitioners had in view.

I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

T. S. DUNCOMBE.

MARTIN JUDE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MINES AND COLLIERIES' BILL. THE DISCUSSION IN PARLIAMENT ON THE BILL. ITS WITHDRAWAL.

This action on the part of Mr. Duncombe was very soon afterwards followed by the introduction into the House of Commons of the "Mines and Collieries' Bill." It was entitled "A bill for the better ventilation of mines and collieries, for the protection and preservation of persons employed in and about the same, and to make other provisions relating thereto," and was endorsed with the names of Mr. T. S. Duncombe, Mr. Bernal, and Mr. Aglionby. The following are the leading provisions of the proposed measure:

Clause 1 recites—The Queen to appoint three inspectors. 2—The Treasury to pay them annual salaries not exceeding a sum left blank in the bill. 3.—The inspectors to enter and examine every mine or colliery in their respective districts, at least four times a year, and may do so whenever they choose, by day or by night without notice. They may examine on oath any person connected with a mine or colliery, and call to their aid whomsoever they choose. Whatever they may observe in the mine that is dangerous or defective, so as to threaten or tend to bodily injury, they shall notify to the owner or his agent, and direct him to alter, repair, or improve, as they may deem proper and advisable; if he disobey, he (the owner) shall forfeit £100. 4.—The Secretary of State may appoint sub-inspectors, who are to be invested with like powers of entry and examination. Such sub-inspectors shall visit and examine any mine or colliery in their respective districts whenever they receive notice to that effect from miners, colliers, or persons employed therein. 5.—24 Geo. II. to be extended to the protection of inspectors and their subordinates in the exercise of their duties. 6.—An Office of Inspectors of Mines and Collieries to be established in London or Westminster, for the use of inspectors, and for the preservation of mine or colliery records. 7.—Regulations to be made for the management of the office. 8.—Every owner of a mine or colliery in operation to send to the office annually his name and address, the name and situation of his mine or colliery, the number of persons he employs, the mode of working, the style of the firm under which the mine or colliery is worked, and a map or plan of the works, machinery, &c. 9.—If any miner sustain injury preventing him from returning to work before nine o'clock in the morning, the owner or agent shall send a notice thereof, within 12 hours, to the nearest sub-inspector, with a statement of the place of residence of the person injured, or the place to which he may have been removed. 10.—The sub-inspector shall proceed to the mine or colliery—investigate the cause of injury—and, accompanied by a surgeon, visit and examine the person injured.

Within 24 hours he must make a report to the central office; and he is to award the surgeon any fee from 3s. to 10s. 11.—The Secretary of State may empower an inspector to proceed by action for the recovery of damages for bodily injury. 12.—Any damages which may be recovered shall be applied for the benefit of the injured person. This clause also makes provision for cases in which the defendant may obtain a verdict. 13.—Owner or agent to give notice of death to the nearest sub-inspector, who shall send notice to the central office, and also intimate the time and place of inquest. 14.—Coroner to give the nearest sub-inspector at least two days' notice of the time and place of inquest. 15.—Inspectors to attend the inquest, and may summon and examine witnesses. 16.—The Secretary of State, on receiving an inspector's report, in case of death, may empower him to bring an action for damages, according to the circumstances under which death occurred. 17.—If damages be recovered, they shall be applied for the benefit of the husband, wife, parent, or child, of the person whose death has been thus caused—as the case may be. 18, 19, and 20.—Provisions as to actions. 21.—Wages for getting, raising, or removing coal, to be according to weight, as ascertained by weights, beams and scales. Breach of this clause to be punishable by penalty, not exceeding £10. 22.—Wages to be paid weekly. 23.—Wages to be paid to each person separately, and not to one person for several others. 24.—Abstract of this act, and of 5 and 6 Vic., cap. 99, prohibiting the employment of women and girls, and regulating the employment of boys in mines and collieries, to be conveniently placarded near the entrance of every mine, and wherever an inspector or sub-inspector may direct. Names and addresses of inspectors and sub-inspectors to be also placarded. 25.—Inspectors to report annually to the Secretary of State, and their reports to be laid before Parliament. 26.—Inspectors also to report to the Secretary of State whenever required. 27.—Expenses of the Act to be borne by a duty of a farthing per ton on every ton of coal sold in Great Britain. 28.—Provides for the collection of the duty. 29.—Surplus, after payment of expenses, to be applied to educational purposes in collieries. 30.—Owner to have an opportunity of acquitting himself of responsibility, whenever the statute has been violated, and throwing it upon his agent, servant, or workman, if the latter be the actual offender. 31.—Complaints to be preferred within a given time. 32.—Complaints shall be heard by two or more justices; and payment of fines and costs may be levied by distress and sale. 33 to 52.—Provisions for insuring the due operation of the preceding clauses of the act.

On the evening of Wednesday, the 30th of June, 1847, Mr. T. S. Duncombe, the member for Finsbury, rose in his place in the House of Commons, and moved the second reading of the bill introduced by him for the better regulation of mines and collieries, upon which—

Sir George Grey (Devonport), on the part of the Government, said he hoped the hon. member for Finsbury would

not press his motion for the second reading of this bill. It was, he admitted, a bill of great importance, owing to the explosions which had lately taken place in mines and collieries; but the subject had been taken into serious consideration by the Government, and he had that day received a report from gentlemen of great practical experience, who had been appointed to inquire into the subject, suggesting certain precautions with a view of preventing the recurrence of such accidents. Whether these suggestions would be effectual for the object in view he did not know, but he hoped the hon. gentleman, having brought the subject before the House, and knowing that it was under the consideration of the Government, would not deem it necessary to do more at present. He (Sir G. Grey) had received a communication stating that the most extensive owners of mines and collieries were ready to enter into communication with Government in order to devise the best remedies that could be found for preventing accidents. The subject was one of too much importance to be hurried forward during the present session, and he hoped that the hon. gentleman, having brought it under the consideration of the House and of the public, would be content to leave the measure to be matured in the next session of Parliament.

Mr. Duncombe said he should wish the bill to be read a second time, if for no other purpose than to affirm the principle that the House would interfere to prevent the causes of accidents in mines and collieries, by which lives were perilled every day; and to declare that they had arrived at a point when it had become necessary to legislate for the better regulation of mines. Accidents from the sudden accumulation of bad air were not so seldom as was generally supposed. In almost all the cases, it had been known some time before that there was bad air in the mine, and that it was dangerous. In so large a proportion might these accidents be prevented by proper precautions, that only one in fifty was unavoidable. He knew that when legislation was talked of, coal proprietors were always ready to promise to take precautions for the preservation of life, but it was necessary to compel and enforce such precautions. If there was negligence on the part of the men, regulations were therefore necessary, which must be enforced; and nothing

but legislative interference could do this. The miners were likewise subjected to other grievances which he wished to see removed. In some places they were compelled to work by measure instead of by weight. In Scotland, Northumberland, and Durham, he believed they worked by weight, but in Staffordshire they worked by measure, and in consequence they suffered great impositions. They asked to be allowed in all cases to work by weight, and they asked also to have their wages paid more regularly. They were now at the mercy of a class of middlemen who drove them to the truck shops, and the consequence was that they found their way unavoidably to the public-houses, where their wages were spent. They desired to have their wages paid at once, and there must be some legislative enactment that the men should be thus paid their wages, or that the Truck Act should not be evaded. He believed that if the House would consent to the second reading of the bill—he did not press the details—it would be a very great satisfaction, by holding out a prospect of protection to the mining population, consisting of 400,000 or 500,000 persons, of whom, at least 500 lost their lives by accidents every year. He did not know why protection should not be afforded to this meritorious class, as well as to persons employed in factories. Of late years there had been many fatal accidents in coal pits. In the Haswell mine, three years ago, no less than 95 lives were lost ; and other serious accidents had since occurred. The commissioners had reported that the time had arrived, and that the subject was ripe for legislation. The only practical measure was to appoint Commissioners of Inspection, with full power to visit all the mines in the country and to report on their condition as to ventilation, &c. The hon. member concluded by moving that the bill be read a second time.

Colonel Sibthorp (Lincoln) said it was the duty of the Government not to dissolve Parliament until provision had been made to protect the lives of those of her Majesty's subjects who were employed in the dangerous occupation of working in the mines and collieries of this country. He thought it was the first duty of all governments to protect the lives of the people in every possible way, and the bill before the House was of infinitely more importance than

Highway Bills and Health of Towns Bills. He hoped the hon. member for Finsbury would not be gulled and quieted by the interposition of the right hon. gentleman, the Secretary for the Home Department, but would proceed with his measure at once; and as to there being no time for it because the session was to terminate on the 20th July, he was prepared to sit the whole of the year, and the whole of the next year, to pass so important a measure. He should support the second reading of the bill.

Mr. Liddell (North Durham) had hoped, after the Government had expressed their view with regard to this measure, that the hon. member for Finsbury would have withdrawn it. Not having done so, he (Mr. Liddell) from a sense of duty, should move that the bill be read a second time that day six months. He at the same time should not be opposed to a measure properly drawn up, and such as would give security to the lives of individuals employed in mines and collieries, if brought forward upon competent authority. But the means proposed for carrying this bill into effect were the most inadequate, and he might say ridiculous, that could be imagined. The hon. member moved that the bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. Bernal (Weymouth) thought that all the details of the bill with which the hon. member who had just sat down found fault, might be amended or altered in committee. The bill called on the House to affirm a most important proposition, namely, that it was the duty of the Government to adopt measures for the preservation of the lives and limbs of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. The Government, however, had not given any assurance that they would introduce a measure on the subject, and it was most important therefore, that the principle of the bill before the House should be affirmed, although there was no possibility of the measure being passed this session.

Sir G. Grey said it had been asked what peril was incurred by allowing this bill to be then read a second time? He would ask what advantage would be gained by it? There had been no dissent from the proposition with which the hon. member for Finsbury had concluded, that it was the duty of the House to provide, as far as possible, against the recurrence of those frightful accidents that had so

frequently occurred of late, and for the protection of Her Majesty's subjects who were engaged in mines and collieries. He thought, however, that great disadvantages would result from their reading the bill a second time ; for, although it contained some important provisions, which he thanked the hon. gentleman for submitting to the public, yet it also contained provisions very objectionable, and if the House were to read it a second time, the public might be led to suppose that they were prepared to legislate upon the principle embodied in those provisions.

Mr. E. B. Denison (West Riding, York), said he was not opposed to the principle of the bill, but he hoped the hon. member would withdraw it at so late a period of the session.

Lord Harry Vane (South Durham) expressed a similar opinion.

Mr. Wakley (Finsbury), said the interests of the poor were always staved off, but if one noble lord had been blown out of a coal pit, instead of hundreds of miners, not only would a measure have been at once introduced, but he doubted if the matter would not have been mentioned in the speech from the throne. (Much laughter.) He thought the voice of humanity called loudly for some interference to prevent the frightful loss of life which so frequently occurred; and the late period of the session was no argument against proceeding with the bill, as there could be no necessity for the House to rise on a particular day. He thought his hon. colleague was bound to persist in the motion. If some of the provisions were objectionable let those be struck out, and let the rest of the bill be passed. It was notorious that these accidents entirely happened from the grossest negligence. All that was required to prevent them was efficient ventilation. Was there anything unreasonable in asking that that might be provided for.

Mr. Newdegate (North Warwickshire) and Mr. Aglionby (Cockermouth), both agreed in the principle of the measure, but thought, under all the circumstances of the case, that the safer course would be to leave the matter in the hands of the Government.

Mr. P. Howard (Carlisle), thought that the time had arrived when the owners of mines should set, not their

houses, but their mines in order. The principle of inspection having been assented to in the case of factories, it could not be resisted in the case of mines. He hoped the Government would take up the measure with energy, and endeavour to improve the condition of a class which so well deserved the consideration of the philanthropist. He was glad to hear that several hon. members connected with the mining interest had assented to the leading principle of the bill.

Mr. Forster (Berwick), observed that nineteen out of twenty accidents that occurred were imputable to the carelessness of the men themselves, and did not arise from any cause which it was in the power of the coal owners to remove. He had looked over the bill, and did not perceive a single clause directed against the notorious carelessness of persons employed in mines and collieries. It should be remembered that when accidents occurred they often occasioned the owners of mines losses that amounted to several thousands of pounds. Surely such losses must produce more effect upon their minds than any £100 penalties that a bill of that kind might inflict. In his opinion there ought to be no legislation on this subject without the report of a committee.

Mr. Osborne (Wycombe), said that if the right hon. baronet opposite would give a pledge, that the Government would proceed with some such measure, he ventured to hope that his hon. friend, the member for Finsbury, might for the present be induced to drop his bill.

Sir G. Grey replied that he could give no distinct pledge on the subject. He could undertake to say that the serious consideration of the Government should be given to it during recess. If they could find an opportunity for proposing a measure on this subject in a satisfactory manner during the next session, he did by no means say that they would be indisposed to do so.

Mr. Duncombe said he considered that the subject had been most fairly met by the other side, but what he complained of was the manner in which it had been met by the coal owners, and by some gentlemen on the opposition side of the House. He found that the same parties who had interfered with factory labour, refused to admit the principle of interference in the case of coal miners. He had now

the same difficulty in dealing with the coal kings as the Government had recently had in dealing with the cotton lords. After the recommendation of the Government commissioners the bill ought not to be made the subject of ridicule, and he hoped that in a future session of Parliament legislation would take place, and be attended with beneficial effects. There had been some attempt to cast ridicule upon the measure which he had thought it his duty to bring forward, and upon the whole proceeding; but he begged to say, it was no joking matter—it was no joke to the poor people who had lost their lives. The report of the commissioners on accidents in mines and collieries distinctly recommended such a system of inspection as should not amount to undue intermeddling with the affairs of the owners, but which should give security to the lives and limbs of the working people whom they employed. The farthing a ton for paying the expenses of inspection was said to be ridiculous, yet he had derived the leading features of his bill from the recommendation of the Government inspectors. He had now only to add, that he left with confidence the whole matter in the hands of the Government, and he should not put the House to the trouble of dividing.

The bill was then withdrawn.

CHAPTER XXV.

INTRODUCTION OF ANOTHER BILL TO PREVENT THE USE OF GUNPOWDER AND CANDLES IN MINES. FORMATION OF A FRESH UNION. STRIKE IN NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM. MURDER OF GEORGE HUNTER AT COWPEN. OUTBREAK OF THE CHOLERA.

The attention which had now been directed to the case of the miners had a most beneficial effect, and though it did not result in any immediate advantage, yet it led the way to changes of a very important character which subsequently took place.

On the 6th of July in the same year, Mr. Duncombe introduced another bill, the object of which was to prevent the use of candles and gunpowder in fiery collieries. It

was hoped that if the measure could be passed much good would result, and many accidents would be prevented till such time as the matter could be dealt with in a thorough manner.

Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, on the introduction of the bill, stated that he should not support it on the second reading.

Mr. Duncombe informed the House that he had introduced the bill in consequence of the rejection of a larger measure on the same subject. His object was to protect the lives of a meritorious and industrious body of men.

Sir George Grey regretted that Mr. Duncombe had proposed a bill of this character at so late a period of the session, after the very decided opinion which the House had already pronounced on this subject. He beleived that legislation upon it, however desirable, would be very dangerous at this moment, for as yet sufficient time had not been given for consideration and inquiry. He requested Mr. Duncombe to withdraw the bill for the present, and said that if Mr. Duncombe would not accede to his request, he must move that his bill be read a second time that day six months.

A conversation of some length then took place, in which Messrs. W. Patten, Liddell, Newdegate, Maule, Trelawmy, and Forster opposed, and Messrs. Wakley, Ferrand, R. Yorke, and Bouverie supported the motion. Messrs. Hutt, Bernal, Hindley, Escott and Lord H. Vane, unwilling to condemn, and afraid to support it, took a middle course and suggested to Mr. Duncombe to withdraw it, but Mr. Duncombe was not to be wheedled out of his bill. He pressed it to a division when the numbers were—

For the amendment	56
Against it	23
Majority in favour of amendment	33

So the bill was lost for that session.

The public mind was now too deeply impressed with the miners' position, their danger and drudgery, to let such an important matter drop. Though the union at this time was wrecked, still there was a feeling amongst the men,

whenever they got a chance to get together, that they should be united again. They became desperate, and it was often suggested that nothing but ceasing work till their grievances were adjusted would bring them any relief. This went on to a fearful extent in both counties. If the monthly bonds gave the owners the privilege of turning men off they wished to get rid of, the men took the same advantage and were frequently giving in their notice and leaving, and thus the owners were never sure of the pits working with any regularity or any degree of permanency.

The next two years were passed without anything of interest to the miners having taken place. True, the leaders as well as the influential friends they had found in Parliament did not abate their labours to bring about a better state of things, but nothing assumed a definite shape. On the 13th of March, 1849, the tocsin of union was again sounded throughout the two counties by the Seaton Delaval men, who for several years past had taken an active part in all the leading movements for the emancipation of their fellow-men, and who were looked upon as the vanguard of liberty. Feeling once more that their own weakness constituted the strength of their opponents, they resolved to form themselves into one united body and have for their rallying cry "The better ventilation of mines, and the Government inspection thereof." Active measures were at once taken, and Mr. Robert Turnbull, of Seghill, was appointed as the first agent to go and proclaim the glad tidings to the surrounding collieries that the men of Seaton Delaval were determined to leave no means untried until the Mines Inspection Bill became the law of the land. But such was the servile condition of the miners at this time that at several of the collieries visited by Mr. Turnbull they were afraid to go near him for fear that their masters should get to know of it, and they would be discharged. But very few of the old veterans that took an active part in the union of 1844, having felt the effects of the men's ingratitude, could be induced to come to the front again. The old spark remaining, soon, however, began to blaze, and a large portion of the Northumberland miners got united and were determined to rouse up their brethren of the Wear and Tees. Mr. William Bell, of Seaton Delaval, was appointed secretary

Mr. John Hall and Mr. George Young (the father of Mr. Ralph Young, the respected treasurer of the Northumberland Miners' Association) together with others, formed the first committee. They went to work in the two counties and succeeded in getting a large number of men both in the Tyne and Wear to join the union. It was difficult to get meetings at many places, and old Ben Embleton was seen on many occasions going about the collieries with a tin pan, or a sheet of iron, commonly called a "bleazer" to attract the attention of the men and induce them to come out. His favourite speech was, "Lads, I know the position the masters have you in, and nothing but your union will liberate you from the oppression you have to bear." A favourite quotation of his was "some one will have to bell the cat." Ben Embleton and his other colleagues were ever ready to address the meetings, till the union began to get a firm hold. But, as in the case at the formation of the previous unions, no sooner were the men united, than they wanted all their grievances shook off at once, and the consequence was there was always a large number of collieries on strike at the same time. Seaton Delaval and Cowpen were on strike together, and collieries in the County of Durham were out in the same way. This prevented many collieries from joining the union, as there was a heavy levy to pay to support those on strike. This action on the part of the men, and that of the masters in turning the men off who belonged to the union, prevented the union of 1849 from reaching the dimensions of that of 1844.

Cowpen Colliery was eleven weeks on strike, and resulted in a great loss to both masters and men, as trade was very brisk at the time. It also led to a very unfortunate affair. A man named George Hunter, a pitman at Cowpen, on reurning home, was attacked by some one and injured so severely that he died in a few days. Hunter was not a union man, and was disliked by the men of the colliery. Some of the miners were apprehended, but as the authorities could not prove any charge against them they were discharged, and those who had caused his death were never found out.

The cholera having broke out at this time with great violence in the colliery districts, the attention of both

employers and employed was turned towards the improvement of the sanitary condition of the villages, and union matters were laid aside for a time, as great numbers of the workmen on the collieries were dying daily, struck down by the dire disease. Among those who fell victims was Mr. William Bell, the secretary of the General Union, whose death took place at Seaton Delaval.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRESH STRIKES IN BOTH COUNTIES. THE ADHESION OF THE BARRINGTON MEN TO THE UNION. STRIKE AT BARRINGTON AND DISORDER AMONGST THE MEN. FINAL COLLAPSE OF THE UNION.

When the violence of the cholera began to abate, the men of West Moor Colliery again turned their attention to their position, and finding no other remedy at hand, came out on strike. It was seen by some of the older men who had taken a prominent part in the battle of 1844 that this was likely to be a terrible struggle, and they were therefore not easily drawn out to take any part in the movement. In time, first one and then another began to buckle on their armour and come to the front. Mr. Thomas Weatherly was appointed secretary of the association in the room of Mr. Bell; and Mr. Kendal, president.

After Seaton Delaval had been on strike three weeks, the dispute was settled by arbitration. Marley Hill, a large colliery in the County of Durham, next came out on strike, and continued out for some weeks. Mr. Nicholas Wood, viewer of the colliery, brought a large number of men from Scotland to supply the places of the men on strike, and an attempt was made by the union men to prevent the strangers from commencing work. This strike, however, ended by the men giving in to the masters' terms.

Hetton Colliery, where Mr. Wood was resident manager, also came out on strike. Mr. Wood and the men had an interview, but as they could not agree, he gave them three days to consider their determination. They still determined to hold out, and then he proceeded, with the police, to turn the whole of the miners out of their houses. After a

short strike, these men also resumed work on the masters' terms.

Another strike took place at Lord Durham's collieries, High Grange, near Durham. The agent, Mr. Morton, had an interview with the men, but they could not come to terms. The officials of the colliery thereupon, with a strong force of police, proceeded to the village and had all the miners ejected from their houses. The pit was then set to work with "blacklegs;" but after a month the men returned to work on the masters' terms. He took back the majority of the men, but refused to re-engage those who had taken the acting part in the union, though many of them had declared themselves opposed to the strike at first. One of those who were rejected had an interview with the agent, and tried to reason with him; but the agent would not hear him and he had to leave. He recited the following lines in his presence, and left the County of Durham, and came to the Tyne:—

> "Tyrants' chains are only strong,
> When slaves submit to wear them;
> For who could bind them on the throng
> Determined not to bear them?"

As several collieries were not in the union in the district of Bedlington, it was resolved to hold a district meeting at Horton for the purpose of bringing in those outside collieries. Barrington colliery at this period was not in the union, and in order to secure the attendance of the men working at the pit, the youths of the colliery village were got together on the Sunday night, and encouraged to tell their seniors that the pit was to lie idle on the following day. This the youths readily consented to do, and commenced between nine and ten o'clock at night. The first house they went into they found those who were in the first shift preparing for bed, on which the youngsters said:— "Lads, hev ye no heard tell the pit's gan to be idle the morn?" Such intelligence is more welcome to the miner on the Sunday night than on any other night during the week, and particularly is it so to young men. As Barrington was a pit which had just been opened out, the great majority of the men employed there were young ones, and but little disposed to question the truth of the assertion. Every

house was visited, and the same story told as to the first, the effect of which was that the pit was laid in the next day. A meeting was called at the pit early in the morning, and it was then and there unanimously resolved to attend the meeting at Horton. When they reached the place of meeting there was already a large body of men present, who had arrived from various collieries in the district. The men from West Cramlington came soon after, with a banner, and Thomas Ramsay, the late agent for the miners of Durham, playing the flute at the head of them was the only musician they had. The meeting was addressed by Martin Jude, Edward Richardson, John Richardson, Thomas and Robert Ramsay, and Joseph Wilson, the agent for the Sailors' Association, North Shields. The men of Barrington resolved to join the union at this meeting, and shortly after they came out on strike. There was more trouble with the Barrington men being on strike than with those of any other colliery in Northumberland. They resolved not at adhere to the principle of keeping the peace, and whenever any attempt was made by the owners to get the pit to work, great destruction was done to property, so much so, that large forces of police and soldiers had to be sent for. The more thinking part of the leading men at other collieries became alarmed at the Barrington men's conduct, and with a view to bringing them to a proper sense of their true position, they resolved to hold another district meeting at the colliery. As the strike had continued for some time, and the men and their families were in consequence suffering from the effects of hunger, it was suggested that every man attending the meeting from pits which were still at work, and who could afford it, should bring a loaf of bread to the meeting. This caused a great attraction, and the meeting was very numerously attended. Hundreds of loaves were laid out in the field, and were formed into letters making the texts :—" Go thou and do likewise," " a friend in need is a friend indeed ; " " help one another." The pit had now been got to work with the officials and some men that they had brought from other places ; but at the meeting the majority of the union men stuck to their former resolutions not to return to work until their demands were acceded to. Though the necessity of keeping the peace inviolate was strenuously

advocated at this meeting, the men found themselves unable to follow the advice of their leaders, but very soon afterwards they let their passions have way again, and indulged in a number of excesses for which no palliation whatever can be offered. One night a number of them went into a house where lived a man who had been the means of bringing a lot of " blacklegs " to the colliery. On the entrance of the men into his house he made his escape up into the garret, and pulled the ladder up after him to prevent the attacking party from following him up. They did not attempt to go up the trap hole, as he threatened he would kill the first man who came up after him. This could readily have been done, as he stood at the top of the hatchway. Great numbers of them then got props and knocked up the loft boards in order that he might fall down in amongst them. Seeing what their determination was, he climbed up on to the beams which stretched across the garret. Several stones and props were then tossed up at him, and he received some very heavy blows. On leaving this house they followed some other men who were working at the colliery, principally officials. One of these, however, fired a pistol amongst the union men, and then they fled and took refuge in the colliery office. They were followed by the men in great numbers, and thinking that the door would not long resist the vigorous attack which was being made upon it, they broke a hole through a wall at the back of the office, and made their escape into the fields. The night was dark, and they could not be pursued any further. This led to several warrants being taken out against the men for breach of the peace, and a great number of them therefore fled into the County of Durham ; but some were taken prisoners. In this way the men were divided and scattered abroad, and the strike was finished ; the men being defeated by their own headstrong and lawless behaviour. Those who remained at the colliery had to go to work on the employers' terms ; but this protracted strike, together with the other expenses which came against the colliery, was the cause of a great loss to the owners.

Large numbers of strikes also occurred at other collieries, to give a detail of which would but be a repetition of the same circumstances. The men became desperate and

careless in many cases, in others they gave way, for to resist with the resources they had at their command was but to unhouse their wives and families and bring greater misery on themselves, if greater could be. The union might therefore be said to be almost at an end in the year 1852, with the exceptions of one or two collieries in the County of Durham, together with Seaton Delaval, West Cramlington, and Cowpen, which held out till the latter part of 1853. The colliery agents at Seaton Delaval discharged upwards of thirty men, amongst them were the leading men, together with a lot of young men who took no part. This was to hoodwink the public into the belief that it was not the leading men alone they were discharging ; but whichever way it was, the most active men of the union were included amongst them. One case by way of illustration :— Mr. Edward Richardson, who we have previously mentioned in the unions of 1844 and 1849, was one of the most intelligent miners of the two counties. He had a son Matthew who was hewing. He was brought home almost lifeless, so much injured that there were men appointed to attend him night and day for some months. When this unhappy event occurred, he had gained strength to go out on crutches. He lived in the house with his father, and as Edward Richardson was one of the thirty who were discharged, it resulted in his son's smart money being stopped. The men of the colliery, determined not to have their union broke up, volunteered to subscribe largely for the maintenance of those men till they got work. The agent then had the whole of the men turned to the door. Amongst them was Edward Richardson with his son, who was then walking on crutches. He then proceeded to the colliery office with his son and asked the agent what he intended to do with his son who was disabled from work. The reply was, " we have nothing to do with you or your son, you have brought it all on yourself, you might have been in a better situation than you are, had you looked towards your own interests." All the collieries left the union, but Delaval ; and the subscriptions became less and less. Edward Richardson went to Shields to live, and was offered a situation as a life insurance agent. He was an excellent scholar, but, however, he did not succeed in his new office. His last effort to get

bread for his wife and family, was to sell the books he prized so much. He died in South Shields from sheer want, and it was reported at the time that there was not as much in the house as would break the fast of any of the inmates. Though he was an intelligent man, he was too independent in spirit to let his wants be known.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PASSING OF THE MINES REGULATION BILL. MISREPRESENTATION OF THE FIRST INSPECTOR UNDER THE ACT.

While the strikes and contentions between the men and their employers were progressing in the North of England, the Mines' Regulation Bill was under discussion in the House of Commons, and finally the measure was passed into law in the Parliamentary session of 1850. Soon after it had passed and had received the Royal assent, Mr. H. Seymour Tremehere, the commissioner who had been appointed under the provisions of the Act 5 and 6 Vic., cap. 99, to inquire into the operation of that Act and into the state of the population of the mining districts, paid a visit to the collieries in the Counties of Northumberland and Durham. The miners of the two counties were not aware that he had been there till his report was printed, as he never went amongst any of the men, but went instead to the agents of the collieries.

The following are extracts from his reports on the miners, and their unions. In one case he said "the policy of the pitmen's delegates, who directed their proceedings, has been the cause of strikes at one colliery at a time, in the expectation that the owners of the collieries finding themselves in the position of seeing their trade pass into the hands of their neighbours, would submit to the pitmen's demands." He further said "the strike of 1844 was organized by delegates of the miners' union. The object of their union was to stop all the manufactories in the kingdom until they could secure the rate of wages they demanded. The colliers were under the instigation of the Chartist delegates, Local Preachers—chiefly Primitive Methodists or 'Ranters'—and showed a

strong disposition to violence." In speaking of the Hetton strike he said, " the owners offered to redress any grievances that their men could prove, but they could prove none. The under viewer of one of Lord Durham's Collieries, Mr. Morton, favoured me with the following account: ' I endeavoured to reason quietly with them, I praised their former good conduct, and said how much regret I should feel if I were compelled to eject them from their houses. I could make no impression on them. I was compelled to give them notice. They refused, and I had every one of them ejected." At Seaton Delaval he made his inquiries of the agents of the colliery as to who were the leaders of the union. The answer he got was, that " they are led there by about 20 young men of the colliery, under 30 years of age, fluent speakers, popular and resolute. Some of the 20 are Ranter Preachers and two-thirds belong to no religion at all." He also adds :—" The agent further informed me that when the men were spoken to privately, they said they knew the union was injurious to all parties, and the well disposed of them could not trust one another."

His report, made up from beginning to end of a tissue of misstatements, was presented to Sir George Grey, Home Secretary ; but Martin Jude, with his ready pen, did not leave one stone unturned in contradicting this false report of the commissioner's. " Tremehere," he said, " did not come to get a correct report, or at all events if he did, he had not gone the way to get one. Instead of taking evidence from all parties, he only went among the petty officials who had been raised up into situations, some of them from working men, and who were now cutting high capers over the poor miners ; the commissioner was shown over the houses these little bodies were then living in, taken to the colliery office, and courteously escorted to the station by the officials ; but the men were not in any single instance consulted. He took it for granted, that all the agents told him was true, and as such presented it to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, perhaps to form the basis of future legislation for all he knew or cared."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HISTORY OF THE SCOTCH MINERS. THEIR SERFDOM. THE EMANCIPATION ACTS.

Having reviewed the history of the Northumberland and Durham Miners, we will now turn back and give some account of the many difficulties and dangers which beset the paths of the poor miners in Scotland, for if the miners were in an unfortunate position in England, they were infinitely worse off in Scotland. It is not out intention to go very deeply into the history of the Scottish miners, but the following general facts will prove interesting to the reader, and furnish a pretty correct notion of the state of slavery in which these poor fellow-creatures of ours were held in the early portion of the nineteenth century. With much force may the lines of the local poet, writing on the English miners, be applied to their case.

"Whene'er aw Dan the Deevil, had—
Or some sic hell-hound—for a marrow,
Maw life, aw's sure was full as bad
As ony tyed's belaw a harrow.

The slav'ry borne by Blackymoors
They've lang been ringin' i' wor ears;
But let them tyek a luik at wors,
And tell us which the warst appears.

If ony, then, o' blacky's race
Ha'e harder cairds then wors te play,
Wey, then, poor dogs, ower hard's their case,
And truth's in what wor preachers say.

Thou knaws for weeks aw've gyen away
At twee o'clock o' Monday mornin,
And nivvor seen the leet o' day
Until the Sabbath day's returnin'.

But then, thou knaws, Jack, we are free;
And though we work as nyek'd as them,
We're not sell'd inte slavery,
Far, far away frae frinds and hyem."

There was in the vicinity of Niddry Mill, near Edinburgh, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, a wretched assemblage of dingy, low-roofed, tile-covered hovels, all resembling each other, and inhabited by a rude and ignorant race of men, bearing about them the soil and stain of recent slavery. Curious as the fact may seem, all the older men

of that village, though situated little more than four miles from Edinburgh, had been born slaves, and many actually were slaves at the commencement of the present century. When Parliament issued a commission to inquire into the nature and results of female labour in the coal pits of Scotland, there was a collier then living that had never been twenty miles from the Scottish capital, who could have stated to the commissioners that both his father and grandfather had been slaves—that he himself had been born a slave, and that he had wrought for years in a pit in the neighbourhood of Mussleburgh, ere the colliers got their freedom. His father and grandfather had been parishioners of the late Dr. Carlyle, of Inveresk, and were contemporaries with Chatham and Cowper, with Burke and Fox, and though they lived at a time when Granville Sharpe stepped forward and effectually protected the runaway negro who had taken refuge from the tyranny of his master in a British port, no man could have protected them from the Inveresk laird, their proprietor, had they dared to exercise the right, common to all Britons except themselves, of removing to some other locality, or of making choice of some other employment. Strange enough, surely, that so entire a fragment of the barbarous past should have been thus dovetailed into the nineteenth century! The colliery women of this village, poor over-toiled creatures, who carried up all the coal from underground on their backs by a long circular wooden stair, built up around one of the shafts, continued to bear more of the marks of serfdom about them than even the men. How these poor women laboured, and how thoroughly, even at this time, were they characterised by the sullen nature of the slave! It has been estimated by a man who knew them well—Mr. Robert Bald—that one of their ordinary days' work was equivalent to carrying one cwt. of coal from the level of the sea to the top of Ben Lomond. They were marked by a peculiar type of mouth, which distinguished them from all the other females of the country. It was wide, open, thick-lipped, projecting equally above and below, and exactly resembling those features found in the prints given of savages in their lowest and most degraded state. Fortunately, however, this peculiar and unhappy type of features, has with the lapse of the last twenty years almost

entirely disappeared in Scotland. It was also accompanied by traits of almost infantile weakness. These collier women have been seen crying like children when toiling under their load on the upper rounds of the wooden stair that traversed the shaft, and have been met, when they had emptied their coals, returning scarcely a minute afterwards, with their empty creel, singing with glee. The colliery houses were chiefly remarkable for being all alike, outside and in ; all were equally dingy, dirty, naked and uncomfortable. The act for emancipating the Scotch colliers was passed in the year 1775, and though it was only such colliers of the village as were above 50 years of age at the beginning of the present century, who were born slaves, yet the men of 30 years old had actually, though not nominally, come into the world in a state of bondage, in consequence of certain penalties attached to the Emancipation Act, of which the poor ignorant workers underground were both too improvident and too ignorant to keep clear. They were set free, however, by a second act, passed in 1779, The language of both these acts, when regarded as British statutes passed in the latter half of the last century, and having reference to British subjects living within the limits of the island, strikes one with startling effect :—

" Whereas," says the preamble of the older act, that of 1775, " by the statute of law of Scotland, as explained by the judges of courts of law there, many colliers and coal-bearers, and salters, are in a state of slavery or bondage, bound to the collieries or salt works, where they work, for life, and are transferable with the collieries and salt works," &c. A passage in the preamble of the act of 1799 is scarcely less striking : it declares that, notwithstanding the passing of the former act, " many colliers and coal-bearers still continue in a state of bondage " in Scotland.

The history of the Scottish colliers is a curious and instructive one. Their slavery seems not to have been a relic of the ancient times of general serfdom and villanage, but to have originated in comparatively modern acts of the Scottish Parliament, and in decisions of the Court of Session —in the acts of a Parliament in which the poor ignorant subterranean men of the country were, of course, wholly unrepresented ; and in the decisions of a court in which no

agent of their's ever made appearance in their behalf. It was a considerable time after their emancipation before the Scottish miners made any stir towards improving their position, but, with the growth of a new generation, a strong and powerful union sprang up, and it was by means of this union that they ultimately succeeded in securing some consideration for their position at the hands of their employers.

So far as we have hitherto gone our record has been one of little else than struggles between capital and labour, or of contentions for the political and social rights of the miners ; but now we propose to turn aside for a short period, and detail the many catastrophes which have occurred in connection with mines, and which exhibit the careless manner in which the mines were managed in the early days of the present century.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DAVY LAMP. A LIST OF ACCIDENTS. AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF EXPLOSIONS IN MINES.

Pitmen and pit work have occupied more or less the minds of the greatest philosophers and scientific men of this country for the last half century. Previous to the introduction, by Sir Humphrey Davy, of the Davy lamp, the hewers at fiery collieries had to work almost in the dark, for in those days there was nothing better than the flint and steel mills to illuminate places where candles could not be burned. The flint was so arranged as to catch the steel wheel which kept up a continual flight of sparks as long as the wheel was kept turned. As may be readily imagined the light which a machine of this description would afford, could only be of the feeblest kind ; but though the system seems so very antiquated in the present scientific age, there are many pitmen still living who have in their youth had to hew their coals by the dingy light given by the flashes of fire flying from the flint and rotary wheel. The Davy lamp having been introduced, the well known Mr. Buddle gave it as his opinion that it was a safe lamp for the miners to work with

in fiery collieries, and all collieries adopted it as such. Experience, however, proved that they were the most deadly instrument ever devised in mining operations, and were the cause of more sacrifice of human life than ever had occurred before. The fact was the men, having confidence in the lamp, the use of which was a guarantee of safety, did not take the same precautions as they would have done had they not had any lamp at all, and to the reliance on the efficacy of the invention is to be traced the cause of many of the accidents that occurred. It was proved by scientific men that if the dangerous elements in mines were met by skilful combination, and the calm promptitude which could only belong to instructed minds, their power would melt away, and the miners would be saved. The men, however, unfortunately had not instructed minds, and the result was that too often the feelings of humanity were harrowed up by the recital of some horrible disaster in which a number of fellow creatures had been suddenly hurried into eternity without a moment's warning. But still the men were sufficiently endowed with natural instinct to be observant of the effect of the wind upon the ventilation of the mines, and even as late as the year 1822, before barometers and thermometers were generally used in the pits to indicate the state of the temperature, the men and boys employed at Walker Colliery when called in the morning would examine the weather, and if the wind was blowing from the south east and threatening rain, they would return again to their beds, for they knew from unhappy experience that the pit would be full of gas. The viewer who had charge of this mine, stated this as the usual practice, when giving evidence before a committee of inquiry on mining accidents.

The following list of accidents in the coal mines of Northumberland and Durham is compiled from the minutes of Mr. Buddle's evidence taken before the select committee, 1835, and from a manuscript list furnished by Mr. T. J. Taylor; and though it is undoubtedly incomplete, many of the minor accidents being entirely omitted, it is yet sufficiently full to indicate the terrible prevalence of these disasters in the last half of the past and the first half of the present century:—

DATE.	COLLIERY.	NO. OF LIVES LOST.
1710, Jan. 18 ...	...North Biddick	17
1743,	Bensham	...70 to 80
1756, Aug. 11 ...	...Chaytor's Haugh	4
1757, June 10 ...	...Ravensworth	16
1760, June 16 ...	...Long Benton	1
1761, Dec. 1 ...	...Hartley	5
1765, April 2 ...	...Walker	8
1766, Mar. 18 ...	...Walker	10
,, April 16 ...	...South Biddick	27
,, Aug. 22 ...	...Lambton	6
1767, Mar. 27 ...	...Fatfield	39
1768, Dec. 21 ...	...South Biddick	—
1773, Dec. 6 ...	...North Biddick	19
1776, Oct. 6 ...	...East Rainton	2
1778, Dec. 8 ...	...Chaytor's Haugh	23
1780, Aug. 21 ...	...Birtley	3
1782, May 17 ...	...Fold Pit (Gateshaed) ...	4
,, Oct. 11 ...	... Wallsend...	1
1784, Nov. 6 ...	... do.	3
,, Dec. 12 ...	... Wallsend...	2
1785, June 9 ...	... do.	1
,, Dec. 4 ...	... do.	2
1786, April 9 ...	... do.	6
1790, Oct. 4 ...	... do.	7
1793, ,, 27 ...	...Sheriff Hill...	14
1794, Jan. 9 ...	...Picktree	30
1793 and 1794 ...	...Washington	2
,, ...	... do.	2
,, ...	...Lambton (A) Pit	1
,, ...	... ,, (B) Pit	Several
,, ...	...Lambton Lady Ann Pit	2
1794, Jan. 11 ...	...Harraton	28
,, Nov. ...	...Globe Pit	2
1795, April 24 ...	...Benwell	11
1796, Feb. 12 ...	...New Washington	7
,, April ...	... do.	2
1798, Feb. 27 ...	...Washington	7
,, May 28 ...	...Globe	4
1799, Oct. 11 ...	...Lumley	39
,, Aug. 13 ...	...Newbottle	1
,, ,, ...	...Oxclose (A) Pit	1
1803, Sept. 25 ...	...Wallsend	13
,, ,, ...	...Morton Pit...	3
1805, Oct. 21 ...	...Hebburn	35
,, April ,, ...	...Oxclose (A) Pit	2
,, Nov. 29 ...	...Oxclose	38
1806, Mar. 28 ...	...Killingworth	10
1808, Aug. 31 ...	...Shiney Row	2
,, Nov. 29 ...	...Harraton	4

DATE.	COLLIERY.	NO. OF LIVES LOST.
1808, Nov. 30 ...	...Fatfield Hall	2
1809, Sept. 14 ...	...Killingworth	12
1812, May 25 ...	...Felling	92
,, Oct. 10 ...	...Harrington Mill (Pensher)	24
1813, July 17 ...	...Collingwood Main ...	8
,, Sept. 28 ...	...Fatfield Hall	32
,, Dec. 24 ...	...Felling	22
1814, April 5 ...	...Howden Pit, Percy Main	4
,, Aug. 12 ...	...Hebburn	11
,, Sept. 9 ...	...Leafield	4
1815, June 2 ...	...Newbottle	57
,, ,, 27 ...	...Sheriff Hill...	11
,, Dec. 11 ...	... do.	5
,, ,, 18 ...	...Townley	1
,, June 30 ...	...Row Pit, Harraton ...	38
,, July 21 ...	...Sheriff Hill...	1
,, Aug. 5 ...	...Wallsend	4
,, Sept. 27 ...	...Jarrow	6
,, Nov. 3 ...	...Owsten	1
,, Dec. 18 ...	...Plain Pit, Rainton ...	27
1819, July 19 ...	...Sheriff Hill...	35
,, Oct. 9 ...	...George Pit, Lumley ...	13
1820, April 29 ...	...Jarrow	2
1821, July 9 ...	...North Pit, Rainton ...	1
,, ,, ...	...Coxlodge	1
,, Oct. 19 ...	...Nesham's, Walbottle ...	6
1821, Oct. 23 ...	...Wallsend	52
,, ,, ...	...Felling	6
1823, Feb. 21 ...	...Owston	4
,, Nov. 3 ...	...Plain Pit, Rainton ...	59
1824, Oct. 25 ...	...George Pit, Lumley ...	14
,, Nov. 19 ...	...Dolly Pit, Newbottle ...	11
1825, July 3 ...	...Juliet Pit, Fatfield ...	11
,, Oct. 5 ...	...Hebburn	4
1826, Jan. 17 ...	...Jarrow	34
,, May 20 ...	...Townley	38
,, Sept. 5 ...	...Heworth	5
,, Oct. 27 ...	...Benwell	2
1827, July 20 ...	...Charles Pit, Lumley ...	1
,, Sept. 5 ...	...Fawdons	2
1828, May 15 ...	...Jarrow	8
,, Sept. 1 ...	...New Pit, Houghton-le-Spring	7
,, Nov. 20 ...	...Washington (1) Pit ...	14
1829, May 13 ...	...West Moor	1
,, June 26 ...	...Dorothy Pit, Newbottle ...	1
,, Dec. 3 ...	...Willington	4
1830, Aug. 3 ...	...Jarrow	42
1831, July 9 ...	...King Pit, Washington ...	3
,, Sept. 20 ...	...Willington	7

DATE.	COLLIERY.	NO. OF LIVES LOST.
1832, Nov. 13 ...	...Heaton	1
1833, May 24 ...	...Great Lumley	2
,, ,, 9 ...	...Springfield	47
,, Nov. 8 ...	...Black Fell	3
,, ,, 22 ...	...Mawsley	6
1834, Nov. 24 ...	...St. Lawrence	3
1835, June 18 ...	...Wallsend	102
,, Nov. 19 ...	...Burdon Main	11
1836, Jan. 28 ...	...Downs Pit, Hetton ...	22
1837, Dec. 6 ...	...Springwell	30
1838, ,, 19 ...	...Wallsend	11
1839, Jan. 28 ...	...St. Hilda	51
1840, June 16 ...	...Haswell	1
1841, April 19 ...	...Willington, Bigge's Pit ...	32
,, Aug. 5 ...	...Thornley	9
,, ,, 17 ...	...Haswell	1
1842, Mar. 2 ...	...West Cramlington ...	1
1843, April 5 ...	...King Pit, Wreckington ...	28
1844, July 18 ...	...West Moor	5
,, Sept. 28 ...	...Haswell	95
,, Oct. 15 ...	...Coxlodge	1
,, Dec. 1 ...	...Seghill	2
1845, Aug. 21 ...	...Jarrow	39
1849, June 5 ...	...Hebburn	31

The second accident on the list occurred on the first attempt being made to work the Low Main Seam in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. The coal in the pit at Wallsend caught fire at the explosion on the 11th October, 1782, and the mine had to be flooded with water in order to extinguish it. The explosion in the month of November, 1784, was supposed to be the result of a spark from the steel mill, with which the hewer was at work; but the explosion at the same colliery in the following year was distinctly traced to a spark emitted from a steel mill. The accident at the Low Pit, Harraton, on the 30th of June, 1817, by which 38 lives were lost, was occasioned by a viewer wilfully unscrewing his Davy lamp, and lighting a candle from it in defiance of the rules of the colliery. According to the above list it will be seen that the number of accidents by explosion has been increasing in the districts of Northumberland and Durham since the middle of the 18th century.

If we class the number for each successive ten years, commencing with 1756, the following result is obtained:—

	EXPLOSIONS.	DEATHS.
From 1756 to 1765 inclusive ...	5 ...	34
„ 1766 „ 1775 „ ...	6 ...	101
„ 1776 „ 1785 „ ...	9 ...	41
„ 1786 „ 1795 „ ...	12 ...	105
„ 1796 „ 1805 „ ...	12 ...	151
„ 1806 „ 1815 „ ...	17 ...	302
	61	734

The Davy lamp was introduced about this period, and the number of explosions became more frequent, and with more fatal results :—

From 1816 to 1825 inclusive ...	20 ...	296
„ 1826 „ 1835 „ ...	23 ...	344
„ 1836 „ 1845 „ ...	15 ...	328
„ 1846 „ 1849 „ ...	1 ...	31
	59	999

The maximum number is found in the period from 1826 to 1835 ; viz., 23 explosions in ten years, with a loss of life amounting to 344 persons, or above 34 each year. The year in which the greatest number of explosions occurred in any single year, is 1817 ; viz., 6 explosions resulting in 77 deaths. The year in which the greatest number of deaths by explosion occurred is 1812, viz., 116 deaths. In 1835, 113 deaths were caused by explosion, and in 1844, 103. Notwithstanding the disastrous nature of this statement there are many hundreds of poor miners who have been blown to atoms, and whose deaths have never been heard of beyond the circle from which they were missed. All attempts to combat the dire enemy of the miner appeared to be in vain, though the men were buoyed up with empty promises which were never or seldom fulfilled.

A committee of inquiry appointed by the Governmento investigate the cause of explosions in pits, at the conclusion of their inquiries drew up a report favourable to improvement, and gave it as their opinion that more shafts were required in order to secure better ventilation in working the mines. In the report of 1835, the committee said " the practice of placing wooden partitions or brattices in ventilating shafts, is to be reprobated ; the slightest explosion may remove them, thus the whole system of ventilation

is destroyed and no timely aid can be rendered to the temporarily surviving sufferers. Your committee have reason to believe that this opinion is generally adopted in the coal-mining districts. To this point they attach an importance, inferior only to the provision of a sufficient number of up-cast and down-cast shafts. They consider the evidence justifies the suspicion that the foul and free air courses are frequently too near to each other, the communications not adequately protected, and that the lengths of air coursings are excessive, giving opportunities for leakage, interruption, and contamination, and that the temporary nature of the stoppings—often boards imperfectly united, sometimes mere heaps of small coal—and their frequent derangement, inevitably produce dangerous consequences."

Mr. R. Smith, mining engineer, who deserves the thanks of the present and future generations who are and will be concerned in mines, stated his opinion that carburetted hydrogen gas is not beyond control, or the power of man to subdue its destructive influence in gaseous coal mines ; and in support of that opinion he submitted to the committee indisputable calculations.

Every effort was made to oppose the adoption of more shafts by the owners, for proof of which assertion a reference to the statement of the late Mr. John Buddle on this subject when examined in 1835 is only necessary. " Can you give the committee any idea of the expense of sinking a shaft ? " he was asked. " I cannot ; but I believe there are some that have cost £40,000 and upwards to reach the coal. The cost varies according to circumstances, so that it is impossible to give an accurate account. I mean the cost including all the outfit of the engine and machinery, and everything of that kind."

" Supposing a pit to cost £40,000, would it be a saving to have two pits, taking into consideration the loss of keeping the brattice in repair ? "—" I would not say that, but when gentlemen have expended £50,000 or £60,000 in sinking one pit, *it might not be convenient to spend* £20,000 *more to sink another merely to avoid the chance of any accident that might eventually happen : in fact I conceive if there were any legislative interference on that point it would tend to extinguish a very large proportion of our coal mines.*

"You sink pits as sparingly as possible?"—"We do." "Does not that in some degree tend to increase the danger of the mine?"—"It does in some degree, but if the committee look to the plan of Wallsend Colliery they will see there are more pits in it than in any other colliery in the North of England, for there are no less than five shafts for the ventilation of 100 acres, which is only equal to 20 acres for each pit. I believe it is a rare instance; I do not believe there is any other colliery that has such a number of pits for the like extent of workings."

Such was the opinion of the late Mr. Buddle. Mr. Mather, however, when examined, estimated the sinking of a shaft at £5 or £6 per fathom, except they met with great difficulty, and Mr. Woodhouse reckoned it from £10 to £20 per fathom, thus it would not exceed £2,000 for 100 fathoms in ordinary cases, an estimate somewhat different to Mr. Buddle's.

The evidence given by scientific men proved that when collieries were worked with one shaft, and excavated such a large area, they were not safe for human beings to work in, nor was it a gain to those who invested their capital in the collieries. A writer on the subject said that neither fear nor favour should be shown in this matter, and that stringent measures were necessary to protect this humble and long oppressed class of operators. Sir H. T. De la Beche, G.B., F.R.S., who was director general of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom, and director of the Museum of Practical Geology in London, for thirty years connected with the Geology and Mineralogy of this Kingdom, and employed by Government upon various inquiries connected with it, gave the following evidence—"The accidents in the smaller collieries are usually unheard of to any extent. It very rarely happens that in them there are more than two or three persons burnt or killed at a time, and this is rarely reported, except in the neighbourhood, nor is it usually much thought of there. I may mention that when we were engaged in the report, we applied to the Registrar General to endeavour to obtain through him, and by means of the coroners, a somewhat detailed account of the needful facts, as we were aware that the case was as before represented. It then appeared that coroners had not

kept proper accounts of such accidents, and in very many cases there had been no inquests at all ; so we arrived at no other than a general conclusion to the effect that, not only looking at the great number of those collieries, as compared with the larger ones, but also at their general defective state, the accidents in them were collectively very considerable. The accidents in them do not excite the notice which is occasioned by explosions in larger collieries. When seventy persons may be swept off it causes general attention, but it is otherwise where two or three only are killed ; a great many are occasionally disabled who are never heard of, but who go upon the parish. A great many persons go upon the parish in consequence of injuries which no one ever *hears of.*"

Men and boys were frequently destroyed and no account given of them, and not even an inquest was held on their bodies to inquire whether they had been slaughtered, or had died by accident or naturally. The survivors of those killed, and others who had been disabled had in nearly every case to seek an asylum in the workhouse, or wander through the world as beggars.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WALLSEND EXPLOSION. CORONERS' INQUESTS. THE INACCURACY OF RETURNS OF CASUALTIES IN MINES.

Having detailed in a general manner the many accidents which have occurred in the two counties of Northumberland and Durham during the last half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, I will now refer in a more lengthened manner to those that were more extensive and characterized with more disastrous results than the great majority. An explosion took place at Wallsend Colliery by which 101 men and boys lost their lives, and four others were seriously injured. Eleven horses also, which were in the pit at the same time, were killed. Directly after the accident eight men volunteered to go down in the hope of rescuing some of their fellow-workmen ; but on descending they were so nearly overpowered by the impure air, that it was with extreme difficulty they regained the ropes, and

were almost insensible when drawn to the top. Mr. Buddle, the viewer, with assistants, went down the C. pit, but the workings were found in so ruinous a state that many tons of rubbish had to be brought to "bank" before the bodies could be reached. In the afternoon of the day following the explosion the remains of two men and nineteen boys were got out and a hideous sight they presented. Some of them were black, shrivelled, burnt, and terribly mutilated; but the greater number, having been suffocated by the fire-damp, had the appearance of being in a profound and tranquil sleep.

One of the redeeming features of these great catastrophes, which occasionally shock the feelings of the world, is that they not unfrequently furnish rare examples of human unselfishness and self-abnegation. Men, as a rule, are too apt in the presence of danger to forget their neighbours and to care for nothing beyond saving their own lives; but there are glorious and heroic exceptions to the rule, and whenever such exceptions happen it is necessary they should be recorded in order that those who survive may be the better for the lesson in humanity which such deeds teach. In connection with the terrible calamity at present under notice an act of real heroism was performed by a deputy overman named Lawson. He and eight boys had been working in one of the dangerous parts about 500 yards from the pit shaft, and within 160 yards of this point of escape they were all found dead together. In front of the body of Lawson were six of the boys ,on each side of him was one of the youngest, and near them were the Davy lamps the boys had been using. The obvious conjecture is that poor Lawson had been attending to his duty, that the explosion in a distant part of the mine had alarmed him, and disdaining to leave his young charges to battle for themselves against the danger, he had hastily collected the lamps, hurried the six elder boys before him through the mine, and, taking each of the two lesser ones by the hand, had travelled till the after-damp had terminated at once their progress and their lives.

About ten o'clock on the evening of the 20th—the explosion having taken place in the afternoon of the 18th, three men and a boy were brought up alive. They were all

more or less burnt, and the intellects of two of them appeared to have suffered by their immolition. Although they had been underground at a depth of 145 fathoms for sixty-five hours, fifty-six hours of which they had literally been entombed alive, it was said that they did not appear to have suffered from hunger. And no great wonder, for one may reasonably suppose that during the awful state of suspense, alternated by concern for their slaughtered relatives and anxiety regarding their own fate, the thought of food would be a matter of secondary consideration with them. One of them, whose leg it was necessary to amputate, died on the 3rd of July following, and is therefore included in the annexed summary of those who perished by this disaster.

Total number of men and boys dead	102
Remaining alive	3
Total in the mine	105
Women deprived of their husbands	17
Widowed mothers, deprived of their sons	8
Children, under the age of 14, left fatherless	48
Total left unprovided for ...	73

The hewers had fortunately finished their shift, and had ridden to "bank," leaving the coal they had hewn to be brought to the bottom of the pit by the putters and drivers, consisting of young men and boys, otherwise the loss of life would have been much greater, and the number of widows and children left to the protection of the public consequently considerably augmented. At the inquest which was held on the bodies of some of the men, the coroner, in summing up said:—"This unhappy occurrence which has taken place might on any day, at any instant of time, for the last fourteen years past, have happened (the period since an explosion in the same mine occurred, when fifty-two men were killed), and can it therefore be said that providence has been unwatchful of the lives of the numerous individuals who have gained their bread in this perilous employment? For reasons of Infinite Wisdom, inscrutable to the human

mind, it has been suffered to take place. The fiat went forth, and 100 human beings have instantly been swept away from the face of the earth ? But are we to suppose this awful visitation will pass away without any ultimate benefit. May it not be the means of leading to investigation in the highest quarter ? Men of science and learning will devote their thoughts, and their energies to the inquiry. And who dare deny that the same providence that so long arrested, and has now willed this deplorable event, may direct some superior individual, whose gigantic mind may successfully grapple with the latent foe, and generations yet unborn look back with gratitude to the cause of future protection. Thus good may spring out of the evil."

With reference to the manner in which deaths in mines from explosion and other causes were recorded, the following taken from a report of the commissioner who was appointed by government, will be read with interest. "I believe," said he, "from the inquiries I have made, that deaths from explosion frequently occur in mines, which are concealed from the knowledge of the coroner and the public." I may also refer my readers to the return ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, dated 11th August, 1834, purporting to show the number of persons destroyed by "choke-damp" and "fire-damp," in mines and in collieries in England and Wales since 1810, so far as the same could be ascertained by the Clerks of the Peace from returns made by the respective coroners ; and a frightful exposition that document presents. In many instances it is admitted that no returns have been made at all by the coroners, whilst for the County of Denbigh, the Clerk of the Peace says, "as the coroner neither makes a return to the Clerk of the Peace, nor expresses in his bills the precise cause of any person's death, I am unable to supply the information required." The only clearly detailed returns appear to have been made by Mr. H. Smith, coroner for Stafford, for these contained the name of deceased, date of death, parish in which the accident occurred, and the cause of death in 104 cases. In referring to the Counties of Northumberland and Durham, where collieries were numerous and extensive, and accidents by no means less in number or in magnitude, I find under the head of "Durham" the following :—

28th of June, 1834.

"SIR.—I beg leave to inform you that no returns whatever have been made by the cornoners to my office, and in order to further the object in view, I have sent a copy of your letter to each of the four coroners, with a request that they will, as soon as possible, transmit to you the returns required, so far as it is in their power to do so :—

T. C. Maynard, Esq., coroner of Easington Ward.

Michael Hall, Esq., Gateshead, coroner for Chester Ward.

William Trotter, Esq., Bishop Auckland, coroner for Darlington Ward.

Thomas Henry Faber, Esq., Stockton, coroner for Stockton Ward.

(Signed)
JOHN DUNRY,
Deputy Clerk of the Peace.

To S. M. Phillips, Esq."

The following replies from the coroners were furnished :

"No such accidents have occurred in Darlington Ward, since my appointment to the office of coroner in August, 1831 ; and, further, from the information I can collect, no such casualties have happened in this ward since 1810.

(Signed)
W. TROTTER,
Coroner for Darlington Ward.

1st July, 1834.

"As coroner for Stockton Ward, I beg to state that I have held no inquests on persons who have been lost or destroyed by choke-damp or fire-damp in mines and collieries.

(Signed)
J. H. FABER,
Coroner for Stockton Ward.

Stockton, 3rd July, 1834."

This appears at first sight to be a highly satisfactory state of affairs. No fatal accidents in two divisions of the large and important County of Durham, and no return whatever made by the coroners of the two remaining divisions, would naturally lead to the conclusion that nothing

had occurred to disturb the peace and tranquility of the mining population. To this subject, however, I shall have occasion again to allude, but meanwhile I will refer to the return furnished for the County of Northumberland. There are two coroners for this county; one was appointed in 1814 and the other in 1815. The former usually acts for Castle and Tindale Wards, and the latter for Morpeth, Coquetdale, Bamburgh, and Glendale Wards. The Clerk of the Peace for the County of Northumberland, in answering the questions put to him as in the case of Durham, says :—" I have made inquiry from each coroner, and I find from the coroner for Castle and Tindale Wards (being the principal colliery district of this county) that since his appointment in 1814 he has held inquests upon seventy-six persons killed by choke-damp. And I find from the coroner of the other district that since his appointment in 1815, he has only held an inquest on one person killed by this cause." This again is apparently very gratifying intelligence; but unhappily it is hampered with one very serious qualification, and that is, it is simply untrue. I do not say it is untrue to say that inquests were held in instances not recorded; but yet I do say that the reports as furnished give an untrue and imperfect statement of the amount of mortality which occurred at this period in the mines of Northumberland and Durham. Nor do I suppose that either of these gentlemen would purposely omit any case brought officially under their notice; but I confess I am at a loss to know why these numbers have not been considerably increased, if such public inquiries had been instituted in all cases of fatal results from colliery explosions. In Durham we find a return of " none " from two of these public officers, the other two making no return at all; and for Northumberland one reports 76 deaths and the other 1, thus showing a total for the two counties of 77. But the public may ask, and that very naturally, why have such fatal catastrophies been kept secret? Or in other words, why have not the necessary inquiries been instituted before the respective coroners of the district in which such calamities have occurred, as the law demands? The unsatisfactory returns to which I have alluded is not only delusive but exhibits the utmost want of courtesy towards the legislature of this country and the

public in general, for whose interests such returns were required.

In addition to the many omissions to hold inquests at all, which must have occurred, since no record of any is furnished to Government when required, a very loose system of conducting these inquiries prevailed, as will be sufficiently exemplified by the following facts. An inquest was opened before Mr. Stephen Reed, coroner, in consequence of the deaths of upwards of 100 human beings ; but the immediate subject for inquiry was as to the death of William Craster. The inquest was held on the 22nd, 23rd, and 29th of June, and after 19 witnesses had been examined, the court decided on the following deliverance :—" An inquisition taken for our Sovereign Lord the King in the parish of Wallsend, in the County of Northumberland, on the 22nd day of June, in the fifth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, William the Fourth, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, defender of the faith, and in the year of our Lord 1835, before Stephen Reed, Esq., one of the coroners for our said Lord the King, for the said county, on view of the body of *John Giles*, then and there lying dead, on the oaths of Anthony Easterly, John Wright, John Armstrong, Patrick Rye, William Jameson, Robert Henry Coward, Mathew Elliott, Joseph Mordue, John Hornsby, John Brough, George Shanks, John Falcus, Charles Weatherly, and Washington Potts, good and lawful men of the said county duly chosen ; and who being then and there duly sworn, and charged to inquire for our said Lord the King, when, where, how, and after what manner, the said John Giles came to his death, do upon their oath, say the said John Giles, on the 18th day of June in the year aforesaid, at the parish and in the county aforesaid, being at work in a certain pit or coal mine, called the G. Pit of Wallsend Colliery ; it so happened that the inflammable air, accumulated and contained in the workings of the said pit, from some cause or causes, and in some part or parts thereof, to the jury unknown, ignited and exploded, by reason and means whereof he, the said John Giles, then and there accidentally, casually, and by misfortune, received divers wounds and contusions in and upon his body, or otherwise was burnt and suffocated, and thereby presently died.

JAMES MATHER.

And so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oaths aforesaid, do say that the said John Giles, by reason and means aforesaid, and in manner aforesaid, accidentally, casually, and by misfortune came to his death and not otherwise. And that in the opinion of the said jurors, there has been no want of due care and precaution on the part of those who had the direction and management of the said mine."

Here then we find, at the opening of the proceedings, that the witnesses were examined touching the death of William Craster; but the jurors in conclusion returned a verdict to the effect that John Giles came by his death "accidently, casually, and by misfortune," without the slightest allusion to William Craster, into the circumstances of whose death they were sworn to inquire, or yet to the remainder of the unfortunate victims, whose lives were sacrificed by the same explosion. This might be the usual course in such cases in Northumberland, where probably the first and last persons exhumed were alone the subjects of inquiry; but even adopting this view, there appears to be an anomaly perfectly inexplicable in the procedure as regards the death of William Craster, or John Giles. Under any circumstances there is nothing in the verdict to indicate the extent of the calamity, and therefore we need not wonder at the want of correctness in any report derived from such sources.

However parties may desire to conceal from the public the enormous number and extent of such casualties, I cannot conceive that any such feeling should be carried to the extent of deceiving the House of Commons, when that honourable body, the representatives of the British public, calls for a return such as it did on the occasion alluded to. If the death of the unfortunate John Giles, or that of William Craster, were alone recorded in lieu of 104, it is only a very fair inference that the 77 deaths reported for the two counties included in the return to Parliament, represented not less than 777 deaths.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SOUTH SHIELDS EXPLOSION. THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF EXPLOSIONS. THE HASWELL EXPLOSION.

The present age, and ages to come, have cause to be grateful to Mr. James Mather for the very active and intelligent part he took in endeavouring to prevent this wholesale sacrifice of human life in mines. Mr. Mather was not one of those men, who, carried away at the moment by excitement and enthusiasm, go among the crowd murmuring their wrongs. No, he was a man bold and resolute, calm and clear-sighted, and one who had an extensive knowledge of mining engineering.

In 1839, the South Shields pit exploded, and fifty men and boys lost their lives. Mr. Mather, on this occasion, went down the pit as soon as any person after the occurrence, and, with some of the colliery officials, rendered great services in carrying stimulants to the sufferers below, and in restoring to animation several of those who had fallen into a stare of asphyxia. His object in going down the pit was to see, if possible, what had been the cause of the explosion. A meeting of the inhabitants of South Shields was called for the purpose of raising a fund for the relief of the sufferers, and at that meeting Mr. Mather was present, and stated what he had seen down the pit. He suggested that there should be a much more minute inquiry into the cause of accidents in mines, and that they should not merely content themselves with relieving the sufferers when any such accident occurred. The practical outcome of that meeting was the appointment of a committee, with Mr. Mather and Mr. Salmon, the town clerk of South Shields, as secretaries ; and the members of which were Mr. R. Ingham, chairman ; Dr. Winterbottom, Mr. Shortridge, Mr. Roxby, Mr. John Clay, Mr. Errington Bell, Mr. R. Walter Swinburne, Mr. W. Eddows, and Mr. Anthony Harrison. These men applied talent, time, and money, for the purpose of lessening the dangers to which the coal miners were hourly exposed ; but none of them were connected with the collieries. They were all men of great ability and activity, and many of them being practical chemists, they applied their knowledge to the

analysis of the gases in the mines, and conducted an inquiry into the causes of explosions in a most scientific manner, and with much minuteness and zeal for a period of three years. They visited the mines in the district frequently, consulted with the most able and practical viewers, corresponded with some of the most scientific men of the day, and made experiments at every opportunity that was afforded them, with lamps and other instruments. Their decision was, that the Davy lamp in the hands of the ordinary miner would frequently lead to accidents. When the report was published, Mr. Ingham, their chairman, in giving his evidence before a Select Committee on Coal Mines, on June 7th, 1852, said :—" That, substantially, the entire merit of the inquiry of the South Shields Committee rested with Mr. Mather, he, having been down the South Shields pit immediately after the explosion."

The following are extracts from the account of what Mr. Mather saw there :—" The deadly gas, the resulting product, became stronger and stronger as we approached. We encountered in one place the bodies of five men who had died from the effects of the gas, and had apparently died placidly, without one muscle of the face distorted. Then there were three more that had been destroyed by the explosion ; their clothes burnt and torn, the hair singed off, the skin and flesh torn away in several places, with an expression as if the spirit had passed away in agony. Going with a single guide, we encountered two men, one with a light, the other bearing something on his shoulders. It was a blackened mass, a poor dead burnt boy he was taking out. A little further on we found wagons that had been loaded, overturned bottom upwards, and scattered in different directions. A horse was lying dead directly in the passage, with his head turned over his shoulders, as if in falling he had made a last effort to escape ; he was swollen in an extraordinary manner. At one point in another passage, we suddenly came amongst twelve or fifteen men, who, in striving to reach the places where bodies of survivors might be found, had been driven back by the surcharged atmosphere of this vast common grave. Their lamps were burning dimly and sickly, with a dying red light, glimmering as through a fog. All were feeling the effects of the poison.

One poor man, especially, was so sick and ill that he had to be brought out in a fainting condition ; and after having had something given him to assist his recovery, he seemed still much affected. He was asked where he felt most oppressed ? and he answered, in a broken voice of suppressed agony, ' I am not well, Sir, I have two sons in there.' The men who were exerting themselves for the recovery of their unfortunate friends, acted with a solemn, high-wrought, steady courage, without bustle, scarcely with a remark, and what remarks were made were such as were necessary, brief and decided, and generally in a subdued tone, such as human nature assumes in its most vigorous, perfect, and ennobling moments. We beheld there the deepest sympathies of the heart, combined with a courage that had never been surpassed. Their companions were brought out insensible from the overcharged atmosphere, struck down at their feet almost without life."

On April 19th, 1841, Mr. Mather visited Willington (Bigges' Pit), where 32 lives had been lost by explosion. We next find him at Wreckington, where, on the 5th of April, 1843, 28 lives were lost ; and then on September 28th, 1844, at Haswell Colliery, where 95 were lost. The explosion at Haswell was very terrible in its effects, and created a deal of excitement throughout the country. An eye-witness of this terrible disaster says :—" At the time of the explosion there were four men in the little pit, whose lives were saved. These were—John Thompson, John Smith, William Chisholm, and John Davison. They happened to be near the upcast shaft, and the flame did not reach them ; it having been stopped in its destructive passage by a wagon and a horse, and a number of empty tubs, which, by the force of the explosion were all jammed together in the rolley way. Two boys were also saved by the same protective agency. All felt that something had happened, though they could not tell what. The candles of the boys were blown out, they saw a flash, and the furnaceman (Chisholm) observed that the air was stopped. Thompson went towards the workings, Smith having first given the alarm to the men in the engine pit, ascended by the downcast shaft, and communicated his fears to Mr. Scott, the underviewer, who was then at the colliery office. Mr. Scott

then descended the shaft—others joined him—but, after going about 500 yards, they were unable to proceed further in consequence of the choke damp. The first body found was that of John Willis, a boy of thirteen. It was brought to bank about 9 o'clock, and others followed ; the last reaching the surface about nine on Sunday morning. The delay in getting out the bodies was occasioned by the pit being entirely filled with choke damp ; the " stoppings " having all been blown down by the blast, and it being necessary to replace them in order to obtain a current of air. Till this was done, no effectual progress could be made. The boy, Willis, was much burnt, and as the body was washed the skin and parts of the flesh peeled off ; one thigh was broken in two, with the bone of the upper part protruding. Others were much more burnt—the features being quite black, and drawn up as if in agony ; whilst, in very many cases, the head was broken as if it had been dashed against the wall. Those above referred to were killed by the flame ; but those killed by the choke damp were not disfigured at all, and for the most part had no expression of pain in their features. Some had placed their caps in their mouths, no doubt with a view of preventing their inhalation of the choke damp. At one part of the mine, at the Brockley Whins Flat, there were about twenty putters found who had been in the act of getting on their clothes. Some were quite dressed, others nearly so, in preparation to leave their work, In the pit, it must be understood, the men work nearly naked, their only dress being a small body shirt, and short trousers half down the thighs. These poor fellows were lying huddled together as if they had felt what was coming, and had so clasped each other to die. Death from choke damp is not instantaneous, and probably most of them lived for a quarter of an hour or more, and some much longer—with the certainty of quickly coming death. On the Monday afternoon the funerals of the bodies recovered began, and by Wednesday all who had thus lost their lives in this violent manner were interred. Some were buried at Easington, the parish church of Haswell ; some at South Hetton ; and some at Hall Garth ; all three places being near Haswell. The love of kindred is strong with the miner ; and one was brought to Long Benton, 25 miles off, where all his family were ; while three lie at

Gateshead, 18 miles from Haswell, brought there for the same reason.

This explosion occurred on Saturday, the 28th September, and the inquest was appointed for the following Monday morning, the 30th, at 10 o'clock, at the Railway Inn, Haswell. At that hour the coroner, Mr. T. C. Maynard, and the jury, composed of farmers and shopkeepers in the neighbourhood, proceeded to view five of those who had been killed, viz., Thomas, George, Robert, and James Dryden, and Edward Wilkinson. All were lying at one cottage, and it was arranged that the inquest should be held on them only ; the evidence as to one, of course, applying to all the others who were killed. The inquiry lasted through the Monday and the following days, and was then adjourned for the convenience of the coroner and jurymen for a week, till Wednesday, the 9th October. Mr. Marshall attended on behalf of the owners ; Mr. Roberts for the relatives, as well as on behalf of the other pitmen of the colliery. He was ably assisted by Mr. Jude and Mr. Clough. On the first day of the inquest Mr. Roberts made an application that Mr. Matthias Dunn, a viewer, bearing a high character for candour and integrity, as well as for great practical skill, should examine the pit on behalf of those whom Mr. Roberts represented, and give his evidence thereon. This, however, was refused, the coroner declining to enforce it, and Mr. Forster, the viewer, refusing to permit it. Mr. Roberts then applied for an adjournment of two days, in order that he might obtain the attendance of some person who might watch the proceedings on the part of the Government ; but this also the coroner refused. On the adjournment of the inquest, Mr. Roberts took advantage of the time afforded for securing his object, and after consulting with Mr. Mather, and one or two other friends of the pitmen, he went to London, and thence to Brighton, where he obtained an interview with Sir Robert Peel. The result was that Professors Lyell and Faraday were appointed to attend and assist at the adjourned inquest. On Wednesday, the 9th of October, the inquiry was resumed, and after continuing till late in the evening, was adjourned till the following Friday. On the Thursday intervening, the pit was examined by Messrs. Faraday and Lyell, and by Mr. Stutchbury, from

Bristol, who also had been deputed to this service by the Government. On Friday the inquest terminated by a verdict of "accidental death," and on the suggestion of the coroner, the jury added that, in their opinion, "no blame attached to any one." This very unsatisfactory termination of the inquiry was the reverse of acceptable to those gentlemen who had undertaken the cause of the miners, and especially was this the case with regard to Mr. Mather and Mr. Roberts. The latter, with that indomitable perseverance which he ever displayed in advocating the cause of the miners, again applied to Sir Robert Peel, then at the head of affairs in this country, and was informed by that gentleman that the Government had determined to bring the whole subject before Parliament early in the following session.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE JARROW EXPLOSION. THE RESULTS OF MR. MATHER'S ACTION. THE EXPLOSIONS BETWEEN 1849 AND 1860.

On the 21st of August, 1845, an explosion occurred at Jarrow Colliery, near the mouth of the river Tyne, by which thirty-nine poor fellows were suddenly hurried into eternity. Having been in a measure baulked in their last attempt at Haswell, the miners determined that, on this occasion, they would insist upon a full and complete inquiry into the cause of the accident, and also as to whether some one was not responsible for its occurrence. In order to carry out this object, Mr. Mather, in conjunction with Mr. M. Jude and Mr. Horn, were chosen. Mr. Mather sent a letter, saying that he was not able to attend the inquest, as he had been down the pit two hours the day of the explosion, and was suffering from the effects of after-damp. Mr. Jude therefore requested the coroner to adjourn the inquest to enable Mr. Mather to be present, but this he refused to do. Mr. Horn then asked leave to put a few questions, and suggested that the witnesses might be allowed to be cross-examined; but this was also refused. The coroner said he considered himself competent to conduct the inquiry, and to manage his own court, and he would not allow any cross-

questioning there. Mr. Horn said he considered the ends of justice demanded that there should be a strict and fair inquiry, and that the pitmen themselves were not acquainted with the forms of courts ; but the coroner cut Mr. Horn short by saying he could not allow the time of his court to be taken up with argument, and at once proceeded to examine the witnesses.

It is impossible in a work of this limited dimensions to follow Mr. Mather through all his investigations at the different collieries, nor would it be profitable to do so ; but after he had laboured long and ardously for many years, he gave it as his opinion that if legislation be wisely, effectively, and energetically enforced, not only will those deplorable catastrophes be averted, but that waste of the mineral wealth of the country, sometimes amounting to 60 per cent., in the mines by the appointment of inspectors.

Mr. Mather had seen the miners shattered to pieces and under every variety of agony and torture, and he had seen their heroic attempts to rescue each other. " Deeds have been done," he said, " in the darkness of the mine, and amidst the most appalling dangers, which ennoble our common nature, and which, if done in the light of day and before the world, would have covered those humble miners with glory. Their deeds are forgotten, and their names only remembered by their sorrowing friends and families."

He laid the dark and dangerous deeds of mining operation before the world, and showed that it was only money that was necessary to prevent such catastrophes as had occurred from occurring again. He showed the necessity of periodical examination of mines by properly qualified inspectors ; he went into the most dangerous mines—not contenting himself with going into the main air-way and measuring the air that was passing—right into the workings, and exposed the rotten system of ventilation that was practised up to within a few years ago. It was a general practice for men to take off their jackets before going into their places, and shake them about to clear away the foul air before they dare take a lighted candle in. The fore-deputy of collieries went early in the morning to examine the working places, and when the men went to work they often found, when the " bord " was excessively foul, their pan shovel stuck up at the bord

end, with the words "dad [shake] here" chalked upon it as an indication of danger. This was the process adopted to secure the safety of the miner, and in many places where the deputy had neglected to give this notice, severe accidents resulted. Another practice was the use of gunpowder for blasting down the coal, a practice that has been the cause, from time to time, of the loss of hundreds of lives. The fore-deputy fired the shots in the fore-shift from three o'clock till eleven, but in the back-shift there were in many cases no deputies, as they generally went home. Before doing so, however, they usually unlocked all the safety lamps, and left all the hewers to fire their own shots, thus cutting off the only protection the miners had. The working places were frequently filled with foul, stagnant air, and the smoke that came from the powder hung upon the men nearly the whole of the day. It is to such gentlemen as Mr. Mather that the gratitude of the miner and owner is due for the existence of a better and more safe method of working the mines. It was through the instrumentality of Martin Jude that Mr. Mather was induced to take an interest in this question, and to acquire such an extensive knowledge of the dangerous working of the mines as he ultimately possessed. Mr. Mather brought the influence of the scientific world to bear upon the British public, and induced legislation for the better education, and for the protection of the miner; and Dr. Murray, in speaking about Mr. Mather, says, "to my simple understanding Mr. Mather has demonstrated, equally and clearly, the necessity for legislative interference. I sincerely admire, and, as a member of the community I greatly appreciate Mr. Mather's manliness. I love his straightforward honesty, and unflinching purpose. Truth appears to be the pole-star to which he keeps a steady eye, and philanthropic zeal seems the impelling power."

In the ten years included in the period between 1849 and 1859, five explosions of a serious nature occurred in the two Counties of Northumberland and Durham, resulting in an aggregate loss of ninety lives. The first of these was that which occurred at Washington Colliery, in Durham, on the 19th of August, 1851, when thirty-eight lives were sacrificed. This was followed soon afterwards by an explosion at Houghton, in the same county, on the 11th Nov-

ember, 1851, by which twenty-six men and boys were killed. In the case of the former colliery, the danger had been indicated by an explosion on the 26th of May previous, by which two men were killed, and again by another explosion in July, just one month before that which resulted so fatally. It was stated in evidence at the coroner's inquest that for six weeks previous to the explosion the men had been much alarmed at the dangerous condition of this pit, and had often complained of it to the deputy. One man had left his work through fear ; another, alarmed for his safety, took with him his father and left the pit. They were both saved, while two other sons who stayed in the pit were destroyed. The Killingworth pit exploded no less than four times in eight days, the first occasion being upon the 23rd October, 1851, killing one man ; next upon the 27th ; again on the 28th ; and again on the 31st of the same month—killing the last time nine people. The evidence tendered at the inquest which was held on the bodies of the men killed showed that the pit had been in a bad state for five weeks, and that complaints had been made from time to time to the overman on the subject by the pitmen, and that one man had left his work through fear. It was also shown that this pit had not more than 30,000 cubic feet of air per minute, and that its old workings were the most extensive in the neighbourhood, amounting in 1835 to more than 100 miles of passages. On the 30th September, 1858, an explosion took place at Page Bank Colliery, in Durham County, by which ten persons were killed ; and on the 22nd of October in the following year four men were killed in a similar manner at Washington.

Before closing this chapter, it may be stated that in the year, 1850, the Act of Parliament making the appointment of inspectors of mines necessary was passed into law. This act was the result of the agitation which had been fomented by Mr. Mather and others, and has beyond all question proved of great service to the miners of this kingdom.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE BURRADON EXPLOSION. THE HETTON EXPLOSION. THE HARTLEY ACCIDENT.

In the early part of 1860, on the 2nd of March, the world was startled by the report of a terrible catastrophe at Burradon Colliery, in Northumberland, for though the lives that were lost were less in number than the loss which had been sustained at the explosions in the beginning of the century—such as at Wallsend for instance—yet the manner in which the terrible news was circulated by the agency of the daily press carried it into almost every household in the United Kingdom in which coals were used. This great calamity occurred on the Friday about half-past two o'clock when upwards of 100 men and boys were in the mine. The pit fired slightly in the first instance, and two brothers named George and Robert Allen, alarmed at the occurrence ran off. When they had got about three-quarters of a mile outbye a second explosion occurred, and, though they succeeded in reaching the shaft, one of them was struck in a violent manner with a stone impelled along the main way by the blast. The alarm having been given by the first explosion some 17 or 18 men and boys ran off and reached the bottom of the shaft in safety, though with great difficulty. As soon as the news of the disaster spread a crowd collected round the pit's mouth, and Mr. W. Kirkley, fore overman, at once descended, followed by numbers of willing assistants, to begin the melancholy work of looking for the dead. For several days this work was continued, and at length the bodies of 72 men and boys, some horribly disfigured, were brought again to the upper world which they had left so short a time previously full of life and hope and vigour. There was weeping and wailing for many and many a day and night in Burradon and Camperdown, and few who had the unhappiness to take part in the melancholy proceedings will soon forget it.

Unfortunately the dangerous condition of the mine was known at the colliery for weeks before the catastrophe, and discussed amongst the miners, as well as the officials. Some of the most intelligent miners of Northumberland were lost at this explosion, amongst them being Mr. George

Maddox, W. Urwin, and others, who had taken an active part with Mr. T. Weatherly in trying to establish the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, with which the latter gentleman has from the very first up to the present time identified himself.

On the Monday after the explosion one of the workmen, Thomas Messer, who lost a brother there and who is now living in Waterloo, Blyth, went into Newcastle for the purpose of making arrangements with Mr. H. L. Pattinson, of the Felling Chemical Works, to secure the services of counsel and a solicitor to watch the proceedings on behalf of the workmen, and to endeavour to gain compensation for those who had lost their natural protectors. The services of Mr. Sergeant Ballantine, of London, Mr. B. B. Blackwell, Barrister-at-Law, Newcastle, and Mr. W. S. Daglish, solicitor, Newcastle, were secured, the latter agreeing to send out his clerk to Burradon to meet Mr. Messer, in order to get up the case for counsel. Mr. Daglish, however, withdrew from the case, and Mr. Pattinson wrote to Mr. Messer, asking him to meet him again, when he gave him a note to go to Mr. Longstaffe, solicitor, Gateshead, who took the case in hands and at once sent out his clerks to Burradon to collect evidence ready for counsel, prior to the commencement of the inquiry. In the meantime the services of Mr. W. P. Roberts, of Manchester, were secured through the instrumentality of Mr. J. B. Langley, then editor of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, and this gentleman memorialized the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey to, have a full and fair investigation of the cause of the catastrophe. Mr. Matthias Dunn, Government Inspector of Mines for Northumberland, was instructed by the Home Secretary to get some lawyer to assist him in the discharge of his duties at the inquest ; and he engaged Mr. Lockey Harle, solicitor, Newcastle ; the coal owners being represented by Mr. Ralph Park Phillipson, Newcastle. In this case Mr. James Mather was again in attendance daily. He descended the mine and gave both his advice and assistance in the perilous task of recovering the bodies from the mine, and when asked by Mr. Phillipson to give his opinion of the cause of the explosion, his answer was short, but pointed, " too much gas and too little air." He also

attended at the inquest, as did also Mr. Hugh Lee Pattinson, J. B. Langley and several others who took an interest in the matter. This inquiry, which extended over a period of thirteen weeks from the time of the accident, failed in the object aimed at by these gentlemen, viz., to secure compensation for damages, and resulted in the ordinary formal verdict of "accidental death." A relief fund was in the meantime formed in Newcastle, the Mayor acting as chairman, and a mixed committee was appointed for the disbursement of the funds, which rapidly flowed in from all quarters. Ample provision was made for both widows and orphans. Mr. Weatherly was appointed by the committee to pay the allowance to those who had a share in the fund, and he has discharged the same duties from that time till the present day. From the evidence adduced at the inquest there can be no doubt that the pit had been in a bad state for some time ; and it was also proved that more were killed by the fire-damp than were burnt by the explosion.

On the 20th of December, 1860, an explosion occurred at the Hetton Colliery, Durham, by which 22 men and boys were killed. Fortunately this occurrence took place in the evening soon after some 200 men and boys had ridden to bank, and when none but the stone-men were down the pit, or the result must have been terribly fatal. There does not appear to have been any suspicion of the presence of gas in this case, for the reports as to the ventilation, timed up to within a very short period before the disaster, exhibit a deal of confidence in the freedom of the pit from that dangerous element.

Following comparatively close upon the Burradon explosion came the greatest and most appalling accident that ever shocked the feelings of humanity or decimated the ranks of industry in modern times. Fortunately such disasters as that which took place at Hartley, in Northumberland, on the 16th of January, 1862, are of but rare occurrence ; happily rare enough to prevent mankind from regarding them as mere events happening as a matter of course, or from growing callous at the immense sacrifice of human life which they entail ; but still they are much too frequent. The explosion at Burradon, followed as it was by another in the same year at Hetton, had hardly

been abandoned as a theme of general conversation, ere news came from the hitherto almost unknown village of Hartley that the beam had suddenly broken, fallen down the shaft, and, blocking it up, had entombed alive no less than 204 human beings. The thing seemed so horrible as to almost be beyond belief, and it was not till the shocking details came to be published in the newspapers day after day, that a perfect idea of the extent of the calamity could be formed. Not only in the North of England did the direful news create a profound and painful impression, but throughout the entire kingdom all were anxiously on the alert for information concerning the labours of the band of willing workers who volunteered their services to endeavour to relieve their unfortunate brethren, hoping against all hope that some of the large numbers of their fellow-creatures might still be brought back to life. The thrill of horror entered the carefully guarded precincts of the court, and wrung from the Queen herself an expression of womanly sympathy, which found an echo in the heart of every true woman of the kingdom. The manner in which this accident occurred was this. The Hartley Colliery was worked with only one shaft, in which also was fixed a set of pumps, the pump shaft being separated from the main shaft by means of brattices extending from the top to the bottom. On the 16th of January, 1862, just after the back shift men had gone down to relieve the fore shift, and when some of the latter had succeeded in reaching the bank, the beam of the pumping engine suddenly snapped asunder and a large portion of it fell down the shaft with a fearful crash, carrying away all the gearing, and ripping away the walls with it in its terrible descent. In connection with this accident one of the most remarkable instances of providential escape occurred that has ever been recorded. At the time the beam broke, the cage was ascending the main shaft with some men ; but though the cage was wrenched, and twisted and shattered to fragments, there were three men of those who were riding to bank in it came out of the pit alive. The names of the men killed are George Sharp and Son, Ralph Robson, and William Brown. The names of the three saved are Thomas Watson, William Sharp and Ralph Robinson. It seems truly marvellous how they could escape

but escape they most assuredly did. When the first alarm consequent upon the occurrence of such a very unusual and serious accident had in some measure abated, some men descended the shaft in order to see the extent of the mischief which had been wrought by the fatal flaw in the beam, and then it was found that the shaft had been entirely denuded of all its lining and fittings, and that the bratticing and spars were all carried to the bottom where they were jammed tightly together. Nor was this all, for the walling of the shaft had been torn away, and a great quantity of stone had also descended, and was still descending, completely blocking it up, and rendering all chance of egress by that means hopeless, at least for a considerable time. Then the real nature of the catastrophe began to be painfully apparent to all practical men about that ill-fated mine, and the awful result began to be anticipated, though none of all those brave fellows were brave enough to give utterance to their fears. It was known that there were upwards of 200 men and boys in the mine, and it was palpable that unless something could be done to clear the shaft—the only causeway by which they could be brought to the upper earth again—the whole of these must inevitably perish. Mr. Matthias Dunn, who was the Government Inspector of Mines in this District at the time, had previously suggested that staples should be sunk from the low main to the main coal seam to enable men and boys to get from the one seam to the other in case of accident, and to a certain extent this suggestion had been adopted, for a staple was so sunk.

He had further advised the sinking of another subsidiary shaft in the yard seam, so that the men could go there for refuge in case of accident, and had this been done the whole of the men and boys would have been saved. The chief ground of the inspector's suggestion was the presence of a large quantity of water in the pit, but Mr. Carr, the manager, knowing that the water was fast being got under, and that any danger from that source was getting with each week more and more remote, as they were draining the standing water from the old Hartley Mill Pit, deferred adopting the advice tendered. If an accident, such as the breaking of a pumping beam could have been foreseen, no doubt the shaft

would have been sunk, but the possibility of any such casualty never entered into the speculations of any one in authority there.

This accident excited more inquiry into the nature of the work of miners, and attracted more sympathy towards them as a class, than any other casualty had ever previously done. In almost every town in the kingdom—certainly in every town which could be regarded as a centre of industry—large meetings were called together for the purpose of devising means to succour the wives and orphans thus suddenly thrown upon the public for support. And at these meetings, not only were funds raised with great liberality, but the work of the pitmen was canvassed, and an active interest began to be taken in their general welfare. At the Mansion House, in London, a relief list was opened, and soon the amount subscribed had accumulated to a sum hitherto unprecedented. This fund was daily augmented by liberal subscriptions which poured in from all quarters—contributions being sent all the way across the Atlantic from America—and finally there was sufficient raised to place those deprived of their bread-winners beyond the possibility of want. This, to a great extent, must have been consoling to the many poor creatures who had thus suddenly lost their natural protectors, but after all there were left voids in aching hearts which no public liberality could occupy or dispel.

Directly the real danger to the men in the mine became apparent a great number of working men volunteered to work in the shaft in order to endeavour to extricate their fellow-creatures entombed below. Volunteering to work in a shaft from which the spears and timber fittings had been ruthlessly torn, was no easy task, for the walls, deprived of the restraint which the presence of strong battens secured, became very unsafe, and loose stones were perpetually falling down the dreadful black hole with a hollow, awful sound, accumulating a mass of rubbish, choking the shaft, and rendering its clearance more difficult. But scorning personal danger in the face of danger to the multitude, these brave fellows, with Mr. Coulson, a well-known sinker, at their head, went down to clear away the wreck ; but it was some days before the bodies were got at ; and when found they

were all, as it had been feared, dead. One resolute young man, named John Gallagher, appeared to have been making a desperate effort to clear away the shaft above where the men were located, judging from the position in which he was found. In this really noble and courageous work, Robert Turnbull, now of Newsham, took a very active part from the first, and never left his position till the whole of the bodies were got out. His duty was to report to the anxious inquiries of the relatives and friends of those who were buried in the mine any information he had to give them, and he stood night and day to his post.

When the rubbish in the shaft had been sufficiently cleared to enable the relieving party to get down to the bottom of it, the bodies of the men and boys were found there. Then commenced a painful and melancholy task, that of getting them to bank with all possible speed and care. They were hung in the middle of the shaft, two or three together, and gently drawn up, their names being reported to the eager and anxious multitude crowding around. There were present a large number of medical gentlemen, eager and willing to render any assistance they could, but each form drawn up out of the ill-fated shaft had long before passed beyond the power of man to restore it again to life. When the names of the bodies rescued were announced, it was painfully interesting to watch the feeling of exultation which took possession of some of the poor creatures waiting for the cold forms of their husbands, their sons, or lovers ; for though hope had left their breasts they still seemed to feel some relief in having the inanimate bodies of their loved ones restored to them. They were dead, it was true, but they had them once more beside them, dead though they were, and even this was a joy in their great affliction. In all the large village of Hartley there was scarcely a house into which death had not been introduced ; whilst in some there were two, three, four, and even five dead forms laid out. It is idle to write of the grief which prevailed, for no writer can adequately describe the universal mourning which took possession of the whole community.

On the Sunday following the recovery of the bodies, the funerals took place, and the mournful procession from Hartley to Earsdon, where they were buried, presented an

appearance indescribably agonizing. The numerous friends of the deceased, with a large number of people who had come from the neighbouring towns, congregated for the purpose of discharging the last sad and solemn duty towards those so suddenly and recently cut off from this life. The various little communities from the neighbouring collieries surrounded the now dismal dwellings of their late friends ; but a grave-like silence prevailed, and was only disturbed by the heart-broken sobs of the forlorn and wretched surviving relatives. The closed shutters throughout the village of Hartley, and the generally gloomy aspect of the place had a very depressing effect, and could not fail at such a moment to awaken in the mind of every one present a sense of the great danger to which the lives of miners were daily exposed. In muffled undertones the men, gathered together outside of the houses, discussed the nature of the accident the effects of which had drawn them all there upon such a sad and solemn errand ; whilst those within the cottages, borne down by grief and dispair, were engaged in taking a reluctant farewell glance of their relatives ere the lids of the coffins were screwed down, and the objects to their affection were shut out from their sight for ever. The ties of relationship were so extensive, that there was scarcely a house in the village in which the calamity was not felt, and from which one or more of the coffins were not brought forth. The coffins were borne to the graves uncovered, for there were no palls thrown over them, and the sound of the mourners' steps were drowned by their loud lamentations as they wended their way towards the sacred edifice and yawning graves. It was a sight not easily to be forgotten by those who had the misfortune to take part in it. The greater number of them being buried at Earsdon Church yard, a monument was placed there to the memory of those who had lost their lives ; a sad testimonial to the powerlessness of man, and the great mutability of the things of this earth. May that mournful procession be the last which the eyes of mankind shall ever be called to look upon, and may that monument be the last which the loving hearts and hands of those who mourn shall ever have a cause to erect on such a sad and solemn occasion.

The danger of working in mines at the present day, great

though it undoubtedly is, is but trifling compared with the perils which beset the miner at every turn half a century ago. There are many pitmen living now who know this, and can appreciate the change which has taken place ; but the rising generation of miners, who know nothing of this, are too apt to forget those men who took a bold position in the agitation which resulted in this beneficial alteration. Accidents are now happily much more rare than they used to be, and with each year they will become still more so, for men of science have now turned their attention to the question, and the results of their patient and earnest thought is being applied in a hundred different ways, and in a hundred ingenious contrivances, the main object aimed at in each being to render work in the coal pits more and more secure. There are men to whom the mining community owe a deep debt of gratitude for this happy state of things, and the foremost amongst these honoured names is that of Mr. James Mather. By their appreciation of such men the miners will stimulate and encourage others to do likewise, for they of all classes of working men, stand most in need of friends.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SEPARATION GRIEVANCE. STRIKE AT SEATON DELAVAL. LARGE MEETING ON THE TOWN MOOR. PASSING OF THE MINES INSPECTION BILL.

Having dwelt at considerable length on the painful, yet withal interesting subject of accidents in mines, we are led back by the natural course of our narrative to a consideration of the social and political condition of the miners, taking up the thread where it was dropped previous to the digression concerning the casualties. For a time the whole of the men might be said to be in a perfectly comatose state, so listless and indifferent did they for a brief period appear ; but this was the calm which invariably succeeds a storm, the lassitude which takes the place of physical activity when the body is capable of no further exertion. However, this indifference did not last long, for soon the men aroused

themselves again to a sense of the manifold wrongs under which they were suffering, and in 1859 commenced a vigorous agitation against the rules relating to the separation of the coals. At this time, and even up to a much later period, the hewers had to separate the small coals from the round. There were inspectors appointed on the pit heaps, and all tubs that contained a certain quantity of small in them were forfeited to the owners. This practice made many a man, after working hard all day, come to bank in debt ; and though it was acknowledged by eminent viewers that the separation system was not a fair one, they said they had no other chance of keeping their trade than by having the best of the round coals only brought to bank. The rules regarding separation at Seghill Colliery were considered the most strict of any in force in the two counties ; for the men not only had to rake the coals with a rake, but every two men had a riddle, and the coals were first raked by them, then riddled and emptied into the tubs. On coming to bank, the first practice of the pitmen was to look at the chalking board, which was a large board whitewashed over, and ruled in columns, so that when any tub was laid out the number of the hewer was put upon this board. The hewer knew how much he had worked for at the face, but never could tell until he got to bank how much of his earnings would be left for him. One man who had just come to bank, and being rather near-sighted, as all pitmen are when they first ride from the black mine into the brilliant daylight, was standing looking earnestly on the board, when two gentlemen who were going down to inspect the pit with the viewer, inquired why all looked at this board when they came out of the pit ? The viewer, who knew perfectly well why the men looked, but who, being a bit of a humourist in his way, said ; " What are you looking there so hard for this morning, Bob ? " The reply he received was, " I am luicking for what I div'nt want te find, maister." Mr. Peter Burt, the father of the much-respected secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Association, worked at this colliery, and one day when he had filled eight tubs he found on coming to bank that there were seven of them forfeited. In spite of the chagrin which such wholesale and unjust confiscation could not fail to induce, the old gentleman could

not restrain his characteristic humour, but turning to another man standing near, he exclaimed :—

> "Aw's shure Tommy Neil this day has me sair hurt,
> He's laid seven out of eight for poor Peter Burt."

This couplet seemed, for some reason, to tickle the fancy of the workmen of Seghill, and it was a familiar quotation amongst the youths long after Mr. Burt had left Seghill. The wholesale system of "laying out," which the above incident illustrates, continued to be practised till the men determined that it could no longer be endured. But it was difficult to get the men stirred up in unison with each other, for whatever the nature of their grievances might be, they were not allowed to meet to discuss them ; because any one who attempted to get up meetings of the kind was almost sure to be discharged. Nor could a room in which to meet be very easily procured either, for the innkeepers of the two large houses in Seghill were in the very reverse of a free position. They did not dare to allow the men to meet in their houses on pain of being ejected, as the public houses belonged to the colliery owners. Whenever meetings were to be called it was done in an off-handed indirect way, the originators saying to their fellow-men, in an incidental and indifferent manner, "I hear there's going to be a meeting to night in Backworth lane," the favourite place of meeting of the Seghill men. The words would pass through the men "there's gan to be a meeting, men," but its object was never stated, for they were afraid not only of the masters but of many among their own ranks, who were always ready to discover anything to carry to the masters. There never was at any colliery men wanting who, for a smile from the masters, would betray their fellow-men and do much injury to themselves. It is true there were not many, but even the few could, and did, do a power of harm to both the employers and the employed, as they misrepresented facts and sometimes imagined them, rather than lack a story to tell. The Seaton Delaval men had had but few meetings, for there being no organization amongst them they seldom met, and their grievances accumulated and became insufferable up to the year 1859. One day when the back-shift men went on to the pit heap to go down, the "laid

out " board was almost covered with numbers, many of their comrades then at work down the pit having had every tub taken from them. One bold and desperate man amongst the number shouted out on the pit heap, " men, how long will ye bear this ? " and was answered by them " not another day." The men became excited and confused, and it appeared almost as if they were bent on doing some damage to property. A hasty resolution was, however, come to, and the back-shift men, instead of going down the pit, went home.

A meeting was called the same afternoon at the Hastings Arms Inn, and it was then and there resolved not to go to work until they got their grievances adjusted. Before coming to this conclusion the question was discussed for hours, but all the debating led to the same result, that the injustice to which they had been subjected was intolerable. The more intelligent men on the colliery contended that it was not legal to stop the pit in this abrupt manner, and though they felt their grievances as bad as any of them, they maintained that the only legal way to get them redressed was, to give in their notices, work till the notice was up, and then cease work. On the resolution being put, however, it was carried by a majority that the pit should be laid idle, with all its consequences. Pitmen as a class do not care to go against the majority, and though they may feel that the action of the majority is unjustifiable they generally prefer to sink their own opinions and throw in their lot with the rest when persuasion is of no avail. There are hundreds of cases in which pits have been laid idle in a similar manner, and those who have moderate and rational views have had to suffer for the acts of the immoderate and irrational. There were nine selected from the men of this colliery and taken before the magistrates at North Shields on July 21st, 1859, for breach of contract ; and as it invariably happens, they were the most intelligent men on the colliery. Most of them were members of the Methodist Societies, far advanced in years, and every one of them at that time teetotalers. The names of those taken were as follows : Wilson Ritson, Robert Burt, Alexander Watson, Thomas Wakinshaw, Amos Eatherington, Henry Beil, Anthony Bolam, Edward Davis and Thomas Beaney. Each

of them was sentenced to two months' hard labour in Morpeth Gaol, with the exception of Thomas Beaney, who being subjects to fits and having taken one that morning, was released. The cases of all were very hard but that of one was particularly so. This was Robert Burt, the uncle of Thomas Burt, a man between 50 and 60 years of age, and who was always looked upon as one of the most reasonable among his fellowmen. His wife was lying on her death bed, and on the morning he was taken away, she had been given over to death. He was a devoted husband, and being besides an earnest Christian, he was praying at the bedside of his dying wife when the police entered and took him in charge. Can any one imagine a piece of greater cruelty? Not only was he punished with ordinary imprisonment, but during the whole of the time his mind would be anxious concerning his wife, that he might never see again. However she did not die during his imprisonment, but a very short time after. The manager was spoken to by the men, and told that the men who had been taken and put in prison were the very men who opposed the strike, and were the most respectable and law-abiding men they had at the colliery; and he replied :—" I know that, and that is what I have put them in prison for. It is of no use putting those in who cannot feel." This is a fair index of the state of feeling existing at this time between the employed and the employer. We have selected those collieries as they were the largest, and considered models in management, so that when such a state of things prevailed at the model collieries the reader can perhaps readily enough imagine the general condition of the miners of Northumberland and Durham up to this late period.

There was a growing desire amongst all thinking men that a union should be established, but the question which required much consideration was, how was it to be done? The men knew by experience that whoever attempted this was sure to be a marked man amongst the coal owners, and few were hardy enough to dare the united wrath of the powerful capitalist. The desire to commence a society amongst the miners for the purpose of providing against accidents was also very strongly felt by the thinking and intelligent part of the men, but nothing short of such

appalling accidents as that at Burradon, could rouse the general body of miners at this time. Mr. J. Baxter Langley, then editor of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, made himself acquainted with many of the miners' grievances, and began to take a very active interest in them, with a view to the amelioration of the condition of the pitmen. At his suggestion an important meeting of miners was held on the Town Moor, Newcastle, on the 23rd June, 1860.

Mr. Young at this meeting proposed "That the plan of the proposed Miners' Provident Association deserves the cordial support of the miners generally, and that the rules and regulations recommended by Mr. J. Baxter Langley, and approved of at several public meetings called together, be adopted by this meeting, and that it be recommended that sub-committees be formed in each colliery to carry out the application of those rules. That the Mines Inspection Bill now before Parliament deserves the attention and support of the miners of Northumberland and Durham." This was seconded by Mr. Nichol and carried unanimously.

Mr. J. Watson then addressed the meeting on the Mines Inspection Bill, which had been twelve months before the miners.

Mr. Thomas Messer, moved "That this meeting is of opinion that the investigation into the cause of the explosion at Burradon Colliery has been useful, but that to secure the full benefits that would arise from such inquiries, action should be taken to make the masters responsible for the accidents which occur in coal mines; that this meeting is also of opinion that the conduct of Mr. S. Reed on the inquest referred to, was grossly partial and unfair, and that the following memorial approved of by a meeting of delegates at Seaton Delaval, be adopted and signed by the chairman of this meeting."

The memorial represented that on occasions antecedent and subsequent to the Burradon inquest the conduct of Mr. Reed had not been of that impartial character befitting an officer and judge in a solemn and important investigation, and it concluded therefore by praying that Sir George Cornwall Lewis, would suspend the aforeasid coroner, till he had satisfied himself by full investigation of the truth of these allegations.

Mr. J. B. Langley seconded the resolution amidst loud cheers. He spoke at some length on the conduct of the coroner at Burradon, and also on the question that was raised in the northern districts of England, whether or not the masters were to be held responsbile for the lives that were lost in the pits. It was to their interests to have accidents in mines thoroughly investigated, to have such a Mines Inspection Bill as would bring all these facts before the public, and would secure their children against an improper amount of labour which interfered with their education.

This meeting, which was of a very successful and useful character, was organized and arranged by a few of the miners, who paid most of the expenses out of their own pockets. They were assisted by Mr. Wilkinson, of the Victoria Hotel who built them a platform gratis, and gave them £2 to assist them in carrying into law the Mines Inspection Bill.

A delegate meeting was held after the general meeting in Mr. Wilkinson's, Victoria Hotel, and a resolution was carried to the effect that a levy of 3d. on each man be made, to be divided equally between the Burradon Defence Fund, the Mines Inspection Bill, and the Miners' Provident Association, as none of these movements had any funds at their command at the time. The principal clauses of the Mines Inspection Bill which was then before Parliament, were as follows :—

"That no boy under twelve years of age be allowed to go into any mine, unless he can produce a certificate that he could read and write. That all boys between ten and twelve will have to go to school five hours in one day every week not being Sunday. That all persons under 18 years be prohibited from taking sole charge of any engine or machinery. That all possible and accessible places must be properly ventilated. That the entrance to all places not in actual working be properly fenced off. That places of refuge at the side of every engine plane, not more than twenty yards apart, be made for the workmen to go into if the set be running. That a general rule, providing that all coal or iron stone shall be weighed, with proper weighing machines to be placed at the bank of every colliery. That the

workmen be at liberty at their own cost and charges to place a man to see the coals weighed. That special rules, drawn up by the owners or agents for the guidance and working of each colliery, must be hung up in some conspicuous place for 14 days, to allow the workmen to see them before they are presented to the Secretary of State for approval. That the payment of wages in any office contiguous to a house where intoxicating liquors are sold be prevented, and that all wages by paid in money ; a penalty of not more than ten pounds being fixed for non-compliance. That no owner of a mine, or any relative of such owner, sit as a magistrate to adjudicate at any trial with such owner and his workmen employed in mines."

The bill embracing the above clauses, was passed, and came into force in July, 1861.

At the latter end of August, 1860, Mr. Martin Jude, whose name had been so often mentioned in these pages, and one of the immediate results of whose labours was the Mines Inspection Bill just referred to, died in North Shields, in very abject circumstances. He was buried at Elswick Cemetery, on Sunday, the 2nd of September, and though he had been the moving spirit amongst the miners for nearly half a century, his remains were laid to rest without the passing tribute of any but that of two or three warm-hearted friends. Referring to this truly great man the editor of the *Chainmakers' Journal* has the following :—

Martin Jude, the true friend of political and social reform, the veteran soldier in many a severe struggle of labour against capital, the earnest worker for the amelioration of the condition of the miners of the North, is now no more. In the fifty-sixth year of his age he shuffled off this mortal coil, and bade adieu to the many friends who admired his talents, and were conscious of his civic virtues. On Sunday, September 2nd, we followed his remains to their last resting place in St. John's Cemetery, Elswick, and dropped a melancholy tear over the bier of our departed friend. For upwards of a quarter of a century Mr. Jude was an efficient labourer in various political agitations, and, as is well known took a prominent position in the unions of the miners of Northumberland and Durham, to which class he belonged in early life, and whose interest he watched until the end of

his days. For some time past he was in declining health, but his death took place more suddenly than was expected. Of great and varied intelligence, his conduct was characterised by an entire absence of egotism. Firm, yet conciliatory towards opponents, his modest and respectful manner gained him many friends amongst those who differed with him in opinion. As our dramatist hath it—

> 'The elements
> So mixed in him, that nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world, *This was a man.*'

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT. THE STRIKE AT WEST CRAMLINGTON.

Having gone this far with the union, it is necessary to turn aside for awhile to record the sudden uprising of a movement which has not been without it influence in the amelioration of the condition of the miners. Amongst the many combinations and organizations which have had such a beneficial influence on the miners, none have exceeded the co-operative movement, which, springing from a very small foundation, has spread over the face of the large and densely populated Counties of Northumberland and Durham, and drawn together some thousands of honest industrious persons. West Cramlington has the honour of having commenced the first local co-operative store. It is customary at colliery villages for men to associate together in small groups, and as each had their different topics to discuss, co-operation was the principal subject debated in one of those small companies of men. It had been discussed in its various aspects, and at last it was decided to make an effort. A meeting was called at Mr. Henderson's, innkeeper, but there was a very small number present. The object was explained amongst the few, they agreed to put their names down as members, and as a test of their sincerity, to pay sixpence per man to defray expenses, should the movement fail. These men, however, did not believe in the word failure. Another meeting was called, which was attended by a large number of workmen, One of the most intelligent

men on the colliery was asked what the meeting was about, and replied, " I cannot tell, but they say it is for every man to have a shop of his own." A little work, published by Mr. George J. Holyoake, called " Self Help," was read and explained—a book that cannot be too often read, even at the present time, in Co-operative Societies. But the very name of the author terrified many, and a number of objections were started by the sceptical, and those whose interests were to be touched by the success of the movement. The religious feelings of the author of " Self Help " were seized hold of as a handle, and the disciples of his co-operative doctrines were described as atheists. But they were no atheists, and some proved themselves to be real Christians—men who wished " to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them." The real reformers persevered through these difficulties, they held various meetings, and finally subscribed a fund, in all about £20. They then took a small room at Cramlington village, and commenced to buy fixtures ; an old dresser serving for a counter, a small coffee mill, weights, scales, &c., the whole not amounting to above £7. Two of the members were appointed to go to Newcastle, and make the first purchases. They laid out the money to the best of their ability, amongst their merchandise being a cask of herrings, a side of bacon, a firkin of butter, a small quantity of coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., and all other things they thought they needed ; not omitting lucifer matches, into which they went largely. The return of the traders was anxiously looked for. Cramlington being upon a hill, with two roads leading from Newcastle, men were seen walking from one lane end to the other, like old smugglers looking out for a lugger on the coast. The cart was a long time in making its appearance, and its delay created no little excitement, for would-be prophets were trying to establish themselves as the wise men of the day by energetically predicting that no cart would come with the goods. Some of the shopkeepers pointed the men out as lunatics. They did not doubt their honesty, nor that they had paid the money away, but they sneeringly asserted that they would never see it again. The more energetic amongst the number were walking to and fro with excitement, and with ill-concealed distrust. At last a little spring cart made its appearance,

which caused some to come out of their houses and places of business, and stand with their hands in their pockets, laughing and making game of the (as they called them) madcaps. The cart having got to the little room, the shop was opened, and competent parties were appointed to sell out the articles. The people thronged about the doors and windows to have a look at the new shopkeepers, who were men with horny hands, but clean ; unpolished about the hair, and in other little items which go to make some men up. These men had nothing of that about them, but they had what was better, honesty of purpose and perseverance. Their idea was with the poet :—

> " Work on though slow your progress be,
> Yet proudly keep yourself from sinking,
> If hands will not perform your task,
> Go back and have recourse to thinking."

The members' wives began to make their appearance in the shop, for the women were as anxious to get on as the men themselves. The reader can imagine how the parcels would be made up by inexperienced men, but the purchasers had their weight. The stock was nearly sold out, with the exception of the lucifer matches, on the first Friday night, and the next day two men were sent away to buy more. Some had fears that if they left the shop, it would be broken into, and so in order to provide against this, two men were appointed to watch the shop all night. They provided, before shutting themselves in, some ale, bread, cheese, tobacco, and pipes, as well as an old gun, with a small quantity of gunpowder, determined if any should make their appearance, to give them a fright. But the night passed without their being molested.

They went on in this way for the first three months, doubling and trebling their orders, till at last the dividend was declared. The prophets now began to see they had prophesied falsely. The number of members rapidly increased, insinuations began to die away, the men who had been fettered to a shop by the credit system all their lives, began to investigate for themselves ; whilst the ladies in the district also set to work, and, in place of attending Newcastle every fortnight, or running up a ruinous account at the shop, they became shareholders and energetic supporters of the

new movement. It took some time, however, before the great majority got properly convinced, but the regular division of the profits, quarter after quarter, soon removed the obstacles. At the close of the first ten weeks the sum of £200 had been raised, and when the first quarterly balance sheet was published it showed that £449 14s. 2½d. had been received for goods sold, realising a nett profit of £38 15s. 10d. In contrast to the first quarter may be given the receipts of the quarter ending March, 1873, amounting to £23,152 8s. 5½d., on which the sum of £2,478 12s. 9½d. was realised as profits, whilst the total amount received since the establishment of the store up to December, 1872, is £375,260 0s. 0½d., of which the large sum of £31,571 14s. 3½d. has been worked for and paid back to the members in the shape of profits. The number of members on the books at the close of the 1st quarter was 80, whilst the number enrolled at the end of the quarter in March last was 1,688. The history of the society at Cramlington is the history of the whole of kindred societies in the two counties. Starting with strong and deeply-rooted prejudices to fight against, and with almost insurmountable difficulties to contend with in want of funds, they have gone on increasing in numbers till there is hardly a village of any pretension in the two counties that does not either possess a store, or is connected with one. Cowpen Store commenced on the same principle in one of the workmen's houses in Cowpen Square. Bebside, Bedlington, Choppington, Newbiggin, Cambois, Backworth, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, and other places followed their example, and have now thousands of pounds at their command, which they would not have had, had it not been for this great principle, which has been so well managed by the Northumberland miners. The fame of success which had attended the trading speculations of the Northumberland miners soon spread to the County of Durham, and the men in that county were not long in following the good example set them. Stores sprung into existence with remarkable rapidity, from small beginnings they passed to large dealings, and from conducting their business in low, wretched-looking buildings, the co-operators of the two counties passed into magnificent palaces of commerce built by themselves out of their own hard earnings, augmented by

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wisely uniting their strength. From distributive co-operation in the shape of keeping shops, they have now passed on to productive co-operation, and ere the present generation shall have entirely passed away, many of those who have laboured down the dark mines in a state of absolute serfdom, working like slaves for a miserable pittance that would scarcely suffice to eke out a wretched existence, may perchance descend the shaft with the proud consciousness of going to work for themselves in their own pit. The Co-operative Mining Society was first called into existence in the beginning of the present year, and at a meeting of the members held at the Mechanics' Institute, Newcastle, in August last, the chairman, the Rev. Dr. Rutherford, announced that they had then 3,000 shares subscribed, a capital of £15,000, and £9,000 of it paid up that was almost exclusive of any society. A current-going colliery had been offered to them on favourable terms, not far from Manchester, and the committee would have entertained the offer if they had had sufficient capital to do so. With respect to their present project, their mining engineer, Mr. George Baker Forster, had advised them at once to secure the Diamond Boring Company's apparatus, and they had accordingly done so, and would commence to bore very shortly at Steeton Hall. In proof of the success attending co-operative mining, I may here quote from the last half-yearly report of Messrs. Briggs, Sons, and Co. (Limited), whose collieries are worked on the co-operative principle, the following : " The past twelve months have been the most prosperous yet enjoyed by the Company. Including the balance brought from last year, and deducting the interim dividend paid in February last, and the interest on new shares, there remains an available balance of £71,797 3s. 3½d., out of which the Directors recommend the payment and appropriation of the following dividends and bonus free of income tax—a dividend of 18s. 9d. per share, being 7½ per cent. on the paid up capital, making a total distribution for the year of 25 per cent. A transfer to the fund for payment of bonus to the employés of the company of £14,256 5s., leaving a balance to be dealt with of £32,592 9s. 6½d. During the year the directors have purchased the Whitworth Main Colliery for £55,000." Then again may be

mentioned the fact that the newly-formed Industrial Coal and Iron Company declared a dividend of $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. for three months, being at the rate of 15 per cent. per annum.

In concluding this chapter, which I have devoted almost exclusively to co-operation, it will not be out of place to quote an extract from a paper on co-operative coal mining, read by the Rev. Dr. Rutherford, Newcastle, at the quarterly meeting of delegates connected with the Co-operative Association in Manchester and the North of England, held at the Temperance Hall, Barnsley, in September last—Mr. T. Hughes, M.P., in the chair. After giving a number of statistics as to the condition of the coal trade at the present time, the rev. gentleman goes on to say :—" The capital employed in the coal trade is probably not more than £20,000,000. Supposing the average increase of price of coal last year to have been 7s. 6d. per ton, the difference to the consumer would have been £45,000,000 ; and of this amount not more than £10,000,000 went into the pocket of the miner, and not less than £30,000,000 into the pocket of the coal owner. Where the coal owner has also been the iron manufacturer, the profits of one year's trade equalled, and in some instances even exceeded, one half of the amount of the capital invested. These are some of the facts that reveal the importance of the coal question, and the vast field which it represents for co-operative enterprise. The present system, even where most considerately managed, is full of conflict. The manufacturer is crippled, and is tempted to economise where economy is most dangerous to the quality of his manufactures. The miner is not wholly satisfied, for although he has better wages he has mostly to live in the same wretched hovel as before the era of great prosperity ; and, moreover, he does not wish to prosper at the sacrifice of the nation's welfare. The coal owner will even say that if he has more wealth, he has more worry ; and the poor householder, most to be pitied of all, finds that owing to the high price of coal, disease and death have a firmer foothold in his household. It is everybody's interest—it is the interest of the nation—to put an end to this anomalous and vexatious state of things. Whether it is the nation's duty to buy up all vested interests in the coalfields of the country, and to work them for the nation on the broad principles of

the greatest economy—the greatest good—is a question which we cannot to-day consider, although the day may come when it will be forced upon the consideration of Parliament ; but we are here to-day to express our conviction that the application of our principles over any considerable area of our coalfields would very soon put an end to the coal famine, to all its sad consequences, and would introduce harmony between the conflicting interests of capital, labour, and trade. All over the country efforts are being made to establish co-operative mining societies, and considerable amounts are already subscribed for working coal. The question now is, whether, at all events at the commencement of the movement, those efforts would not gain strength by such an arrangement ; concentration might destroy the possible competition between such societies for coalfields, and would render the purchase of mining properties more easy. The larger capital thus secured in the hands of our society would be inspiring greater confidence, facilitate such purchase, and possibly secure better terms. It would contribute to economy both in the purchase of shares and in the distribution of products. By having a number of collieries in different parts of the country, there would be a greater probability of success from distribution of risks. Then there would be a better selection of properties, and probably a more uniform, scientific, and, therefore, economical working. With general unity, there should be local committees for superintendence of mines, so as to lessen all risks, and the adaptation of general principles, with special modifications. Such were the requirements at the present time to prevent a scarcity and famine of coal."

Leaving this important and interesting question here, for the present, we come back again to the efforts of the men at the various collieries to free themselves from the universal thraldom that was now apparently about to settle over them. With the passive conduct of the men, the employers had grown bolder, and every now and then new and irritating regulations were being introduced by them, the tendency of all of them being to limit the earnings and liberty of the men as much as possible. Scarce a month passed at this time without there being a strike in some parts of the two counties. Now it was in Durham, and

then it would be in Northumberland, but these for the most part were not only productive of no good but often brought about unpleasant results to those who had taken part in them. West Cramlington Colliery, from the first commencement up to the 22nd year of its being worked, had had no less than 23 strikes, thus making an average of one strike in every year, and two in one year. The last strike which occurred at this colliery took place in April, 1861. The men gave in their notice for an advance of price, and a few days before their notice expired one of the workmen, who was supposed to have a great deal of influence over the men, was sent for to the colliery office, where he had a long interview with the manager. He declined taking upon himself the responsibility of deciding for his brother workmen, or of urging them to withdraw their notices, on which the manager at the close of the interview said to him :—" If the pit lies idle I will blame you for it, and not give you another day's work." The answer he received was a very proper and deserved rebuke, for he was told, " You can do as you please, but such conduct is not gentlemanly." The pit was laid idle two days previous to the expiration of the notice, the men leaving all their work tools in the mine together with the coals that were standing on their way from the face to the shaft, and, many of them, all the coals they had hewn on the previous day. The agents thought by this to get the men to work to fill their coals, so that it would enter into a fresh month's engagement, but the men came out on strike with a very determined temper, and would not even go and fill their loose coals. The head viewer met the men at the colliery office and endeavoured to arrange matters, but as he had nothing to offer, the interview terminated without any arrangements being come to. When he found that the men were disposed to stand to their terms he marched into the village at the head of a band of policemen and bailiffs, and commenced to turn them out of their houses. At this the men became desperate, and the miners from Dudley, Seghill, and Cramlington, coming in force to resist their ejection, it was found that the policemen were not sufficiently strong to keep back the crowd. The position of the bailiffs began to look very dangerous indeed, when those who had some

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influence over the men called them aside, and after some discussion a deputation was sent to the viewer, and the official in command of the police force. But for this timely interposition, a riot would certainly have occurred. The harsh and illegal proceedings of turning the men out of their houses when the colliery owners were still in their debt for work which had been done and not paid for, was pointed out to them and they, seeing the force of this argument, gave orders to the bailiffs to cease operations. This being done the crowd at once dispersed, and the peace was not broken. The next day Mr. Hugh Taylor, one of the owners, came out and met the men, and had a friendly discussion with them. He proposed that the men should go to work at once, work for a week, and that a proper average should be taken of the week's work, promising that if after this was done it was found that the men's demands were right he would willingly grant them. The men resumed their work, and after the end of the week Mr. Taylor met them again. He said he found upon examination that their demands were fair and reasonable, and at once granted them. In addressing the men Mr. Taylor expressed a hope that "bygones would be bygones," and that both the men and the agents would go on harmoniously together, and forget the temporary unpleasantness that had taken place. Thus by the timely and judicious interference of Mr. Taylor a very unpleasant dispute was settled in a manner satisfactory to both parties. The peace that was then restored between the owners and the men has never since been broken, for though up to this time there had been an average of one strike a year at this pit as we have previously stated, since that year up to the present time there has never been any fresh disturbance.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MEETINGS CONCERNING THE HARTLEY ACCIDENT. MEETING TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT RELIEF FUND. THE RELIEF FUND ESTABLISHED.

The fatal accident at Hartley colliery in the early part of January, 1862, which has already been referred to in another chapter, having carried off upwards of 204 men and

boys, a meeting to raise a fund for the relief of the widows and orphans left destitute was held in the Guildhall, Newcastle, on January 24th, 1862. The Mayor of Newcastle, Mr. I. L. Bell, presided, and the Bishop of Durham, Lord Durham, Sir M. W. Ridley, Bart., Alderman Laycock, and a large number of other influential gentlemen were present, and took part in the proceedings. Mr. Joseph Cowen, Junr., introduced a deputation of working men to this meeting for the purpose of expressing the desire of the working men to have three of their number appointed on the committee for the purpose of carrying out the object of the fund for the relief of the widows and orphans. This was readily agreed to by the meeting.

On the day following a large public meeting was held in the Lecture Room, Nelson Street, Newcastle, when Mr. W. Grieves presided.

The first resolution submitted to the meeting was, "That in the opinion of this meeting, the resolutions agreed to at the public meeting held in the Guildhall yesterday were satisfactory to the workmen." This was carried with great unanimity. Mr. Thomas Weatherly moved the second resolution which was as follows :—"That the workmen in each colliery and factory in the two counties of Durham and Northumberland be requested to organise a collection amongst themselves at the earliest possible date, and that they transmit the same to the general committee in Newcastle with as little delay as possible." This resolution on being put to the meeting was also agreed to.

Mr. James Mather spoke at this meeting. He said he felt that the miners were certainly not the intelligent men he had conceived them to be, if they did not learn a lesson from their sad experience, and make provision for such catastrophes as this which had taken place at Hartley. It was also proper that the public themselves, who derived so much from the mines, should be aroused when the terrible calamity had taken place, and it was a proud thing to him on the preceding day to be present, and behold the fine generous warm feeling which was exhibited at the meeting. It was a happy thing to see that a great coal owner, in the person of the Earl of Durham, in the few remarks which he made, and the deep emotion which he exhibited in making

them, showed that he felt it a deep responsibility to be an owner of coal mines ; and that no means or schemes should be spared to secure the safety of the miners. He wished his lordship would often show himself to the public with such noble sentiments. This terrible misfortune unparalelled in the history of mines, was not the only thing that drew their attention, and which would carry conviction of the necessity of approving of the resolution which he would submit to them. Let them go back to Burradon. What did they see there ? Scarcely had the shadow of death gone from that pit till another more terrible visitation had occurred to them, and why might the men in that case not have been recovered alive ? Why were they destroyed ? It was no use mincing the matter. He blamed no man, but he blamed the system, and the system was terrible and destructive. It was wealth against life. He concluded by moving the following resolution, " That a petition be sent from this meeting to the two Houses of the Legislature, praying that a special Parliamentary committee be appointed, to inquire into the general question of accidents at collieries, with a view of devising some plan by which a repetition of the frightful calamities that have lately taken place can be avoided ; and that in the opinion of this meeting, no colliery should be worked without two shafts having been first sunk for the security of the men and the mines."

Mr. Joseph Cowen, Jun., seconded the resolution. He said the whole question of accidents in coal mines would have to be inquired into, and at once. But while he said this, he did not mean to cast any reflections on the owners of the particular mine which had been the scene of the late horrible catastrophe. Hartley Pit was no worse than many other pits in the district. Messrs. Carr, instead of being worse, were very much better masters than many the miners had to deal with. The only feeling that existed in the district amongst all classes towards the very unfortunate owners of Hartley Colliery, was one of sympathy. They had simply acted in accordance with a very general custom in working their mines ; and in asking for a searching investigation into the entire subject, it was not individuals, but the entire system they condemned. They must insist upon all collieries in future having two shafts, or two good

modes of entrance and exit of some kind ; and he believed that the general adoption of such a system would conduce as much to the advantage of the colliery owners, as it would certainly do to the safety and comfort of the working men.

A miner rose to ask Mr. Dunn, the Government Inspector, who was present at this meeting, if he had any power to order two shafts to be sunk where he thought they were required ? The following colloquy then took place :—

Mr. Dunn said he was very glad that that gentleman had given him a subject on which to speak. In the first place, he had a circular from Sir George Grey, showing that up to this time Government themselves had not the power of making a double shaft ; and every inspector was called on to give him some information as to what shafts were single, and what were double. Many people in this country did not understand the object of this government inspection. The inspectors could only deal with general principles. An inspector could not go into this, that, or any other mode of working the pits, and it was the fault of the men themselves if they did not call the inspectors more frequently. They were bound to attend their calls, and he challenged any one to say he did not attend a call when it was made. The men were the proper persons to move the inspector. It was not his place to know all the particulars of every colliery. Changes were going on constantly in the management of collieries, and these changes were made independently of the inspector altogether. He was not bound to know, and he had no means of communication. He stood alone, and he could not do anything by virtue of his own exertions. Therefore he hoped that they would take warning from this event, and take the thing into their own hands, and make the inspector work.

Miner :—I believe you have something like 150 collieries to inspect ?

Mr. Dunn :—Yes.

Miner :—Twenty-eight in Cumberland ?

Mr. Dunn :—Yes.

Miner :—Do you think you are able to inspect all these ?

Mr. Dunn :—Well, the Government thinks I am able, you know.

Another Miner :—Were you satisfied with the one shaft

at this colliery, if so there is an end to the matter ; if not, what steps did you take to remedy the defect ? Did you apply to the Secretary of State, showing him that it was defective ?

Mr. Dunn :—At this very moment there are three of the largest collieries in Northumberland—Seaton Delaval, North Seaton, and Newsham—managed by the most talented men in Northumberland, all with single shafts. Now, what would you have me to do ? Do you think it is my duty to call in question the management of these pits ?

Miner :—Am I to understand this is an answer to my question ?

Mr. Dunn :—Well, I am not so well satisfied as if they had two, but I have not the power to alter it.

The chairman then made some remarks, observing that there were many deficiencies, both in the shaft sinking, and in the " inbye " working. He believed the matter could be remedied, and he had no doubt if the public understood their position, they would look to the men and support them in advocating the reform of mines.

A miner said the men should look to themselves, and not leave so much for the public to do for them.

Mr. Towers then ascended the platform and addressed the meeting, stating that he had come there at the instance of Sir Fitzroy Kelley, and other gentlemen, who had taken a deep interest in the welfare of the British miners. He said he should have much pleasure in handing over fifty guineas to any committee they might appoint. The meeting, which was a very successful one, was soon afterwards brought to a close.

A delegate meeting was held at Crook, on the 12th of February in the same year, under the presidency of Mr. John Howie, for the purpose of considering further the proper course to be adopted in carrying out the resolutions agreed to at the public meeting held in Newcastle. Delegates representing 2,000 miners were present, and after considerable discussion, it was unanimously agreed that a Permanent Relief Fund be established.

The first general delegate meeting in connection with this important question was held at the Wheat Sheaf, in Newcastle, on February 15th, the main object of the

meeting being to consider the best mode of establishing this Miners' Permanent Relief Fund. Mr. Benjamin Cree, of Dudley, was appointed chairman. Mr. Thomas Gascoigne, Burradon, who had acted as secretary up to this time, was the first speaker called on. He said he had written to Mr. Nicholas Wood, Hetton Hall, Mr. Hugh Taylor, Backworth, and Mr. T. E. Forster, drawing their attention to the project the men had in view, and he had received replies from the two former gentlemen, but not from the latter. Mr. Wood wrote as follows :—" I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd inst., and to say that I cordially reciprocate the feeling of the miners of Northumberland and Durham in establishing a Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, and I further beg to add that they may depend upon my cordial co-operation in accomplishing so very desirable an object. I would, however, beg to suggest, as my opinion, that such a fund should be a joint act of the masters and workmen, and that to render it permanently useful and effective it should have the sanction of Parliament. If it be your wish, I shall be glad to be the medium of communication with the coal owners on the subject," Mr. Taylor's communication was as follows :—" I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your note, and to inform you that I have sent it to the chairman of the coal trade. I may mention that I am decidedly in favour of a Miners' Permanent Fund, and I shall be glad to promote it to the utmost. The men should agree on some course of action, and then communicate with their employers."

Mr. John Howie moved, " That the opinion of this meeting is that a Permanent Relief Fund be established amongst the miners as early as possible." Mr. Alexander Blyth seconded the proposition, and it was unanimously carried.

Mr. Thomas Gascoigne moved, " That this meeting earnestly recommends to the Hartley Relief Committee that, after the sufferers at Hartley are adequately and comfortably provided for, to devote the surplus, if any, towards forming the nucleus of the Permanent Fund, to which the owners and workmen of the various collieries in England will be invited to contribute," Mr. William Grieves seconded this motion, which was also unanimously carried.

Mr. Gascoigne further said that on account of the nature of the employment he was then following he had not time to devote to the duties of the secretaryship, and moved that Mr. Alexander Blyth act as secretary. This appointment was agreed to, Mr. Blyth was at once elected, and has filled that office with great ability up to the present day.

At this time Mr. Towers came into the meeting with Captain Milne, and said he had prepared a code of rules for their consideration, and if they were approved of, Sir Fitzroy Kelley would revise them without fee or reward; on which Mr. Howie moved, "That this meeting feels deeply grateful to the National Association for their exertions on behalf of the miners, and agrees to act in unison with that association; and generally approves of the rules read to this meeting, and recommends them for the adoption of the miners generally." The motion was seconded by Mr. William Grieves, but Mr. Weatherley moved an amendment to the effect that a committee of twelve be appointed to revise the rules, and after the men had fixed upon some definite plans, to lay them before the coal owners, and invite their consideration and co-operation. This was at once adopted by a very large majority of the meeting, and thus was formed the nucleus of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund of Northumberland and Durham.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AGITATION FOR AN IMPROVED METHOD OF WORKING MINES. THE CONDITION OF THE COLLIERIES WITH REGARD TO THE NUMBER OF SHAFTS.

The occurrence of the terrible accident at Hartley was not without its beneficial, as well as its disastrous results; for not only did it direct public attention to the miners as a class, and to the many dangers to which they were exposed in following their daily work, but it aroused and stimulated the men themselves to fresh exertions to secure a correction of some of the many mischievous and dangerous systems adopted in working collieries. Naturally enough, since the accident at Hartley was rendered so terrible in its result owing to the lack of shaft accommodation, this was the first

question to which they turned their attention; but in agitating for an improvement in this respect, the men did not forget that their lives were exposed to great risk each day by other means than this, and which could easily be removed if a little pressure was put on the coal owners. With this end in view, a number of meetings were held at the various collieries in the two counties, at most of which the establishment of a General Provident Fund was considered necessary in the first place, and a thorough and vigorous agitation for the immediate sinking of a second shaft at all collieries where there was only one in existence at that time, as well as for the removal of a great many anomalous rules then in force, and of which they were the victims. A large meeting was held at Crook, with Mr. John Howie as president. He said it rested with the miners themselves whether satisfactory measures would be adopted for their future safety. The whole country was at their back, and parliament at this time might be induced to enact such laws as would make them comparatively safe while following their arduous labours in the mines. It was resolved at this meeting to commence a General Provident Fund for the relief of those who met with accidents in coal mines, and to agitate till some measures calculated to insure the further safety of the miners was passed.

On Saturday, February 8th, 1862, a meeting of delegates was held in the Lecture Room, Nelson Street, Newcastle, for the purpose of devising plans for a change from the then existing system of mining operations, and for the better preservation of the lives of the mining community. There were about nineteen delegates present, and Mr. William Grieves was called to the chair. A delegate suggested that as nothing had been prepared to lay before the meeting a committee should be appointed for the purpose of drawing up resolutions embodying the objects of this meeting. Five delegates and the chairman were appointed for this purpose, and on their return the chairman read the first resolution as follows :—" That in the opinion of this meeting the present system of working coal and ironstone mines is dangerous to the lives, and injurious to the health of the miners, and that for the purpose of effecting a change in the system, petitions pointing out remedies for such evils

be agreed upon as speedily as possible, and presented to both Houses of Parliament." The second resolution was :— "That for the better carrying into effect of the former resolution, an executive committee and secretary be appointed to draw up the aforesaid petition." Whilst the third was :—"That district committees be formed, each committee having a treasurer and corresponding secretary, and that it be the business of the committees to use the best means of attaining the objects of this society." The committee appointed for the purpose of drawing up a petition to the Houses of Parliament met very soon, and after mature deliberation the following petition was adopted :—

"*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled,*

"The humble petition of the Coal Miners of Great Britain,

"Respectfully sheweth—

"That from the frequent number of terrible disasters occurring amongst miners produced by one shaft, as in the last appalling catastrophe at Hartley Pit, your petitioners are convinced that there is no safety for themselves, or security for their families from destitution, whenever your petitioners are exposed to the dangerous condition of single-shafted mines. That your petitioners have arrived at this inevitable conclusion from sad experience amongst their class. That every mine previous to working coal should have two distinct shafts sunk, one at the dip and another at the rise, with a view to the ulterior plans of the mine, and also that in proportion to the extent of royalty to be worked, a proportionate number of shafts ought to be put down, not only for better ventilation and the security of the miners, but also, in the judgment of your petitioners, for the cheaper and more advantageous working of the mines. Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Honourable house will cause inquiry to be made into the present system of ventilation and working of mines, with a view to the better protection of miners from the appalling disasters that are perpetually overtaking them.

"And your petitioners will ever pray, &c., &c."

At another general delegate meeting, held on the 8th of March, and which was very largely attended, it was agreed to send three men round to all the collieries in the two counties for the purpose of ascertaining the number of pits that were worked with one shaft, and to deliver petition sheets at each colliery in order that they might be subscribed to, and request the men to send them in with a delegate to the next meeting to be held on March 22nd, 1862. This meeting was held in the Lecture Room, Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, for the purpose of receiving the reports of the persons appointed to ascertain the number of pits worked with one shaft, and also to receive such petitions as had been filled up. Mr. William Grieves, of Choppington, was called to the chair, and the following report was then submitted to the meeting :—

" Prudhoe and Mickley Collieries.—These were very extensive workings, and were connected with a drift, which made them equivalent to having 2 shafts. At Wylam Pit there were 4 shafts, 3 down-cast and 1 up-cast. Townley pit was constructed similar to Hartley, having only 1 shaft, and the pumping beam working over the pit mouth. Blaydon had 2 shafts. Walbottle 4 shafts, 3 down-cast and 1 up-cast. Walker Pit had 2 shafts, 1 up-cast and 1 down. At Harton and Hilda there were 2 shafts, 1 up and 1 down-cast. East Holywell had 2 down-cast and 1 up shaft. Backworth only 1 shaft. Seghill 2, 1 up-cast and 1 down. West Cramlington 1 up-cast and 1 down. East Cramlington, Dudley, and Shankhouse Pits, were ' holed ' one through another ; but they had 6 shafts in all, 4 down-cast and 2 up. Seaton Delaval had 8 shafts, 2 for pumping, 4 down-cast and 2 up. Seaton Dealval, in the opinion of the delegates who had drawn up the report, presented a perfect model of a colliery. Burradon had 2 shafts, 1 up-cast and 1 down. Killingworth Colliery had 1 shaft 14 feet in diameter, divided into 3 shafts. There was a pumping beam working over the shaft mouth, 4 cages, and a set of pumps, all working in the shaft in which the men had to go up and down. It was a highly dangerous state of things, the lives of the men being constantly in peril. At Seaton Burn there was an up-cast shaft, a set of pumps, a steam pipe, and a furnace, all in the one shaft in which the

men had to ascend and descend. The men must necessarily be subjected to much annoyance from the steam pipe, as the steam leaked from every joint of such pipes, and through this parboiling process, the men had to pass and repass in going up and down. At New Delaval there was only 1 shaft, and the same state of things prevailed at New Newsham. Cowpen had 3 shafts, 1 up-cast and 2 down. The men had to ride in the up-cast, and there was a steam pipe in the shaft. Bebside had two shafts, 1 up-cast and 1 down. Sleekburn had 5 shafts, and the Glebe and Sleekburn Pits were 'holed' through into each other. Netherton had 3, and Choppington 2. North Seaton, a very extensive colliery, had only 1 shaft. Ashington had 2, 1 up-cast and 1 down. Ratcliffe, Broomhill, and Togston were well provided with shafts. At Whickham there were 2 shafts, 1 down and 1 up-cast. Shipcote had 2, Marley Hill 2, Crookgate 1, Burnopfield 2, West Pelton 2, and the Lintz Colliery 2. East Tanfield had but 1 shaft, but there was a way out in some of the neighbouring pits. Tanfield Lea had 1 shaft, and a way out. Tanfield Moor 1 shaft, and a way out. Medomsley and Derwent had each 2 shafts, with a way out, but the means of egress was many miles from the working places. Investon 1 shaft, Tyne Mill 1, Berry Edge 2, Lizzie Pit 1, Bank Foot 1, and Pontop 2. The last three had a way out by means of small holes. Barnhope 2, Quaker House 2, South Stanley 1, East Stanley 1, Oxgate 1, East Beamish 2, West Beamish 2, Urpeth 1, Whitworth 2, Merrington 2, Bishop's Close 1. Page Bank 2, Byers' Green 2, Black Prince 2, Elm Park 1, Farnley 1, Etherley Hope 3, Inkerman 1, Stanley 1, Roddymoor 1, Grimsley 2, Whitelead 1, Job's Hill 1, Bar's Close 1, Crook 2, Bitchburn 1, Annhope 1, Roughlea 2, North Bitchburn 2, Hunwick 2, New Field 2, East Sunnybrow 2, North Sunnybrow 2, Bean 1, Langley Moor 2, Sacriston 2, Eaninsley 2, Framwellgate Moor 2, Ryhope 1, Seaton 2, South Hetton 1. This latter pit and Dalton were 'holed' into each other, Haswell had 2, Shotton 2, Castle Eden was worked in a similar way to Hartley. Wingate 2, Trimdon had a staple, but there was no apparatus for bringing up the men in case of accident. Trimdon Grange had but 1 shaft, though this colliery, Kelloe New Winning,

and Five Houses were all connected. To Thornley and Great Hetton Collieries there were six different pits, all 'holed' one through the other. They were considered models of ventilation and good arrangement. There were 2 shafts at Thornley, at Cassop 2, Belmont 1, Kepier 2, Whitwell 2, Shincliffe and Hoffe 2, 'holed' through into each other. At Coxhoe there were 3 pits, two of them connected with each other. Haggersgate 1, Chilton 1, Leasingthorn and Westerton 1 each, Shildon Lodge 1. At West Auckland and St. Helen's plenty of shafts, and this was also the case at Evenwood and Etherley. Lady Londonderry's and the Earl of Durham's Collieries were well arranged and 'holed' to each other, and they had not one colliery with but one shaft."

The chairman said he thought the step they had taken was a right one to bring their condition before the public, and he hoped that at some future time their appeal to the Legislature would result in placing them in a position of security, so that in future they would not, upon the occurrence of a misfortune, have to go and throw themselves upon the benevolence of a sympathising public as paupers. If a proper investigation were made into such matters, more caution used in the working of mines, and more scientific men placed over them, there would be less loss of life.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THREATENED RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE YEARLY BOND. GREAT MEETING AT HORTON. COMMENCEMENT OF THE PRESENT UNION OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS. THE MINERS' PERMANENT RELIEF FUND.

Towards the close of the year, 1863, the colliery owners gave notice of their intention to re-introduce the system of binding the men on the collieries for an entire year in place of the monthly binding then in force, an intimation which created much alarm, and at once provoked a spirit of resistance. The owners no doubt imagined that the men were disunited, and that there would not be sufficient unity in

their opposition to the proposition to render it successful In this they were mistaken, for the men, viewing the matter with a grave apprehension, displayed great alacrity in at once organizing themselves for any struggle that might occur. The initiatory meeting on the question, convened by anonymous advertisements and placards, was held in a large field at Horton, near Blyth, on Christmas Day, and was attended by between 3,000 and 4,000 miners, representing the collieries of Seaton Delaval, Holywell, New and Old Backworth, Old Cramlington, West Cramlington, Burradon. Seaton Burn, Seghill, North Seaton, Sleekburn, West Seaton, Barrington, Cowpen, New Delaval, Bebside, and Dudley. Old banners, that had been folded away in the houses of some of the men, since the memorable strike of 1844, were brought out again, and unfurled in the frosty breeze. Bands of music played merrily to the field of meeting, and some of the old and well-tried heroes of the hard-fought battle of 1844, were present. The chairman said the pitmen of the County of Northumberland had been working for the last 18 years with a monthly bond, and were never expecting at this time of the year that a yearly bond would be brought forward. The meeting had been called that day to allow them to give an opinion whether the yearly bond was practicable and useful to the men at this time of the year, and to show their determination to resist the bond, if in their opinion its re-introduction would be to their disadvantage. Their opinions would be given freely, and when they held up their hands, they should do so, not simply as a matter of form, but as an expression of their determination to show the masters that they were not to be imposed upon. Mr. J. Nicholson, of Sleekburn, then moved ; "That it is the opinion of this meeting that we resist the yearly bond, and make no agreement until the masters put away that bond." Mr. Patterson and Mr. Thomas Baulks then addressed the meeting, after which Mr. Nicholson further moved :—"That the pitmen of Northumberland form themselves into a union." Mr. Wilson, Seaton Burn, seconded the proposition, and this, as well as the former one, was unanimously adopted.

A delegate meeting was afterwards held at the Folly Inn, when Mr. Thomas Baulks was appointed treasurer, and

Mr. R. Patterson, secretary, of the new union, which the larger public meeting had decided upon the formation of. It was resolved that another delegate meeting should be held at Seaton Delaval on the Wednesday following, the 30th December, and this meeting was held at the Hastings Arms Inn, in the village. There were twenty delegates present, and most of them reported that the owners had withdrawn the yearly bond; whilst at Choppington and Bebside, the owners had never introduced it. Many of the collieries had commenced work at the old prices, but some, however, had suffered a reduction of a halfpenny and a penny per ton. At those collieries where the owners had not withdrawn the yearly bond, it was agreed, should the men come out on strike, to support them. Mr. Nicholson moved that an executive committee of five men be appointed, and that there should be a levy of a halfpenny per man to form a sinking fund to be appropriated to the men when they were turned off. It was agreed that each colliery should keep its own funds, and that its contributions in case of necessity be according to the number of members enrolled at such colliery, and that they be sent to the executive committee when called for. Messrs. Elliott, Dixon, Wakenshaw, Nicholson, and Wilson, were appointed as an executive committee, and it was also resolved "that a cordial invitation be given to all the collieries or colliers to join in fellowship as a trade union, as the only way of securing that independence that Englishmen should enjoy, and which it is their duty to secure in every legitimate way."

The average earnings of the Miners of Northumberland and Durham were taken at this time, and amounted to 4s. 2d. per day. Several collieries, however, were only working half time, but the men had a very selfish practice of going every day to work and hewing coals to fill the next day the pit worked. There were no rules as to when a man should go down the pit or come out of it, and many stayed as long as their strength would allow them. It was customary for men to take bargains at the colliery, at a very low rate on account of the privilege of being allowed to work every day; and by this means a man was enabled to put two days' work out in one day. These double days were included in the average, whereas if it had been taken from

each day worked it would not have amounted to more than from 3s. to 3s. 6d. per day. To correct this state of things, a resolution was passed at another delegate meeting held on the 7th of February, 1863, at which there were delegates from 23 collieries representing 2,903 members, to the effect that no man should work longer than seven hours at the " face," and that when the pit was idle no one should go to work. This was the first reform effected by the present union. Mr. William Crawford, now the agent of the Durham Miners' Union, but who was then working at Dudley, was appointed to draw up the rules and submit them to the next meeting, and to act as general secretary for the association.

A largely-attended meeting was held at Horton on the following Good Friday, for the purpose of considering and adopting the rules of the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Mutual Confident Association, and to lay before the miners of the district the necessity of restriction in the hours of labour, and of organization amongst them. The chairman having opened the meeting, the secretary (Mr. Crawford) read the proposed rules of the society as agreed on at the meeting of delegates. The objects of the association were therein stated to be—the better protection of the labour of its members, and as far as possible to lessen the amount of loss of life and health. Each colliery was to send delegates to meetings to be held in Newcastle half-yearly. Each member was to pay one penny per fortnight, and each colliery to take care of its own funds. No colliery was to come out on strike unless its case had been approved of, and that course sanctioned by the managing committee. and if any man was turned off through advocating the rights of the union, he was to be supported as long as he was out of employment. Each colliery was to appoint a committee to act, if possible, in unison with the masters to see that the health and lives of their fellow-workmen were preserved. This committee was to keep up a correspondence with the general secretary, to enable him to lay any information before the managing committee for the purpose of taking any steps they might deem necessary to remove existing evils. The secretary here informed the meeting that there were 3,500 men in the union.

Mr. Mather, who had been invited to attend this meeting, wrote a lengthy letter stating his inability to do so. He offered many suggestiong for the guidance of the association, and pointed out what they should keep on their programme till accomplished ; that was, " more safety for the miners' lives, and better ventilation." He concluded by saying that though he never interfered between employers and employed but where life was concerned, he had always felt a deep interest in the welfare of the miner.

Thomas Baulks, Joseph Sheldon, H. Henderson, and T. Wakinshaw, then addressed the meeting, and after it broke up a delegate meeting was held at the Folly Inn, to consider what modifications should be made in the rules, and other business. At this period there was considerable agitation going on throughout the country, and amongst the miners, for the amelioration of the condition of the latter. The National Association was advocated by many, by others emigration was set forth as the only chance reserved to the miner of throwing off his yoke, whilst the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund and the Miners' Mutual Confident Association each in turn found numerous supporters and advocates. There were difficulties in the way of the establishment of any organization, for the employers did not, through their agents, fail to keep a sharp eye upon the movements of the men, and whenever they saw any attempt on the part of the latter to become organized, they invariably dismissed the men who had been most active. Out of all the above movements, that which was regarded with the least suspicion was the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, and in its establishment a large number of coal owners and influential gentlemen interested themselves. This, however, gave rise to suspicion amongst some of the workmen, as they believed that the employer and employed could never be trusted to work together. Whilst there is no doubt that this jealousy was felt by a great number of the men, they had cause for it in a measure, for neither the employers nor their officials ever condescended to meet their workmen to discuss any grievances that existed between them. Time, with all the mutations which it has worked, had produced no greater change than that which has taken place in this respect, and only a few short years of mutual confidence and forbearance

have demonstrated that it is for the benefit of both employer and employed to have a good understanding with each other. The men of Cowpen Colliery were strongly in favour of the British Miners' Benefit Association, as well as the union, and they engaged at their own expense, Mr. J. Sheldon, who had previously worked at the colliery, and had been discharged, to lecture in the two counties for the purpose of establishing this association. After he had laboured for a long time, and to a great extent in vain, he wrote the following letter to the *Miner* newspaper :—

" Dear Sir,

I have had the pleasure of attending large meetings in the district, and have endeavoured to show my fellow miners how they might elevate themselves ; but unfortunately in this north district the men are much divided ; and although I will continue to arouse them, I have little faith in the redemption of the present generation. Societies have become innumerable, but which the men will stick to I cannot tell. We have some seventy or eighty for the National Association. What is the cause of the men being so backward I am at a loss to say. At this colliery (Cowpen) we have a union five or six hundred strong, and it seems to be the anxious desire of all the leading men here that the National Association should be pre-eminent, for they believe it is the only society, connected with the Miners' Mutual Confident, that can work out their deliverance."

The real secret of the want of success of Mr. Sheldon and his coadjutors in advocating the claims of the National Association, was the very extensive existence of the jealous feeling to which I have before adverted, and which was for a long time mainly instrumental in retarding the progress of the men. There was no difference of opinion as to the necessity of a strong union. First they could not bear the idea of sending their money to London, for one of the rules of the National Association was that all the monies of the various societies should be sent to the association in London. This jealousy and lack of confidence in the integrity of their fellow-men begat a very strong difference of opinion, and from merely holding and advocating different opinions, the advocates had recourse to personalities, and so pre-

judiced even those who would not join their society from joining the Permanent Fund. The advocates of the National Association spent their time and their talent, not in recommending men to join it, but in running down the Permanent Fund, whilst the members of the Permament Fund were equally as active in advising the miners to have nothing to do with the London society, but to join their's.

After many misrepresentations on both sides, the first annual meeting of the Permanent Fund was held on May 2nd, 1863, in Saint James' School Room, Newcastle. Mr. John Howie presided. This gentleman was, at the commencement, an advocate for the National Association, but seeing reasons for changing his views, he became a very active promoter of the Permanent Fund, and is at present the president of this very flourishing society. He opened the meeting by saying :—" They had had many difficulties to contend with, and it had been prophesied over and over again, that they should become defunct—and in fact, that they were defunct—but so far from that, the association was full of vitality, and even their enemies had acknowledged that the Miners' Permanent Fund had a standing, and was now an accomplished fact." (Cheers.)

The secretary, Mr. A. Blyth, then read the following report :—" This being the first annual meeting of this society, the committee deem it their duty to lay before you a brief sketch of its progress up to the present time. This society was instituted on the 7th of June, 1862, and the first contributions were paid on the 21st ; these contributions representing 2,000 members, and including 30 collieries. During the first three months, the society increased very rapidly, for the returns of October 29 showed the number of members to be 7,560, and the collieries connected with the fund were 61. We believe this rapid increase was in a great measure owing to the labours of the agent who was appointed at the August meeting, and who was out eight weeks. Since that time the accession of members has been slow but steady. We cannot determine the exact number of the members at the present time, owing to some of the returns not being forwarded in proper time, but according to a rough calculation we think the number will be something like 8,000. As to honorary members, several have

come forward to assist us without solicitation ; but your committee have not been in a position to make any great efforts to obtain honorary members, owing to the delay that occurred in getting the society properly registered, and, in consequence, the difficulty in getting arrangements made for the instalment of the trustees and other officers in office. We have now, however, succeeded in getting all the arrangements perfected with the exception of the president. The vice-presidents that have accepted are the Right Hon. T. E. Headlam, M.P. ; the Rev. G. T. Fox, M.A. ; John Straker, Esq. ; and H. L. Stobart, Esq. The honorary trustees are H. Taylor, Esq., Backworth ; J. W. Pease, Esq., Darlington ; and Wm. Stobart, Esq., Sunderland ; and as our solicitor, George Armstrong, Esq., Royal Arcade, Newcastle. We would undoubtedly have been able to fill up the office of president had not the committee been confined to certain names, the office of the president being so important. The committee deem it unadvisable to take upon themselves the responsibility of selecting one to fill this office without the sanction of a delegate meeting. The finances are in a very satisfactory position. We have received since the commencement of this society, on account of the relief fund, up to March 28th, 1863, the sum of £942 16s. 1d. We have paid to two maimed men, five half-members, seven widows, twelve children, four permanently disabled members, the sum of £204 4s., leaving a balance in hand of £738 12s. 1d. At the different collieries in connection with the fund 52 men and boys have been killed since last May, only 14 of whom were members of this society. We have received on account of the management fund, £128 14s. 1d. Paid for expenses, goods, &c., the sum of £183 18s. 11d., being £55 4s. 9¼d. more than the receipts. To balance this deficiency, there is due from various collieries for rules and cards, £25 15s. 0½d. ; saleable stock on hand to the value of £12 10s. ; together with the working property of the society, such as books, &c. Balance due to the treasurer, £16 19s. 8d.

Mr. W. P. Shield (Kepier Grange Colliery), having been appointed by the Executive Committee to make the necessary calculations to determine the amount of contributions that miners at different ages would have to pay in

order to secure an annuity of 5s. per week, after arriving at the ages of 60, 65, and 70, had drawn up a report on the subject, which had been printed and placed in the hands of delegates present.

It was proposed by the Houghton-le-Spring society that a superannuation clause be in connection with the fund, and that the stated age when to receive relief be, when a member attains the age of 60 years.

Mr. Henry Taylor (of Newcastle), informed the meeting that he had received a letter from Mr. Backhouse, of Sunderland, stating that something like £1,200 was lying in the bank there, contributed to the Hartley Fund, but which had not been forwarded ; and he and his coadjutors were of opinion that it would be better to hand it over to this fund. (Cheers.) There was also £80 which had been subscribed by different parties towards the Permanent Fund, which had been sent to Wood's Bank, to the credit of the society. (Hear, hear.) After a long discussion, it was at length decided that at whatever length of time from the occurrence of an accident it should be satisfactorily proved that death ultimately resulted therefrom, the member should be kept upon the fund till death, and that his widow and children should be entitled to the same benefit as though he had been killed on the spot.

It was also decided that the general secretary have a salary of £5 for the year ending May, 1863.

The following were re-elected, with the addition of Mr. Henry Taylor, of Newcastle, as honorary secretary :—treasurer, Mr. John Baillie Leithead ; secretary, Mr. Alexander Blyth ; vice-presidents, Right Hon. T. E. Headlam, M.P., Rev. G. T. Fox, M.A., John Straker, Esq., H. L. Stobart, Esq. The following were elected on the general committee, namely :—Honorary members, Messrs. J. J. Hunter, J. Richardson and J. Bramwell. The other members were Messrs. Shield, Dixon, D. Cole, W. Simpson, Cruddas, Bailes, Burdis, Jos. Bell, John Brack, and John Howie.

Mr. Stobart spoke at this meeting and said he was not afraid to tell the delegates that there was a great amount of jealousy between masters and men, and the day was coming fast when that would be swept aside. The coal trade in a

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great measure were afraid that the Permament Fund would give support to strikes.

Mr. Henry Taylor said he was sorry there was some reluctance on the part of some of the coal owners to acknowledge the society. He believed the trade had a mistaken idea as to the way the Permament Fund was before them. He concluded by saying that unfortunately for both masters and men, there was a jealousy existing, but it always had and would be until a proper feeling existed between employer and employed. The day was not far distant when masters and men would shake hands with each other and recognise each other as members of one human family.

This meeting gave a stimulus to this useful and benevolent society, which has been progressing up to the present day, and now has the large majority of the most intelligent miners of the two counties as its members, together with a great many honorary members. Happily no one now either in the society or out of it has any doubts as to its beneficial mission, or any misgivings as to its being an evil. Nor do the men any longer display any jealousy, or feel otherwise than honoured for such gentlemen as Mr. Hugh Taylor, Mr. Henry Taylor, Mr. H. L. Stobart, and others of influence to be connected with them. The whole management of the society is in the workmen's hands, they have universal suffrage in sending their representatives to make the rules for the guidance of the society, and if there is anything wrong in the government they have themselves to blame, as the gentlemen above named take no part further than to pay their subscriptions. Mr. Alexander Blyth still continues to act as secretary, and he has now for a companion Mr. William Steel, a most intelligent miner.

In contrast to the first report of this society may be given that which was submitted to the annual meeting held in Newcastle on the 7th of June, 1873, and which will give a perfect idea of the great progress which has taken place since its establishment. The report of the Executive Committee stated that upwards of 5,000 members had been added to the fund, the total number of branches now being 230, with 30,000 members. This large increase was attributed to the energy of the canvassing agents. The minor accident fund had kept pace with the parent depart-

ment. It now numbered 25,000, and was established in every branch but three. Over 3,000 individuals in this department had been injured while following their employment, and had received from one to 26 weeks' payments. This branch was now in such a satisfactory position that the committee thought they might safely authorise the amalgamation of the permanent and the minor branches. The sick fund comprised 500 members, and had a balance of £150. The report next remarked that the employers showed no signs of faltering, but were ever giving proof of their desire to help forward the society. There was only some half-dozen owners in the two counties who held aloof from contributing to the fund, which was devoted to the sustenance of the widows and orphans, together with disabled miners who were deprived of their ordinary income from accidents in the mines. Reference having been made to the deputation to Mr. Winterbotham on the truck system, the committee went on to remark that there was still as great necessity as ever for carefully husbanding the resources of the society. The trying or testing point has not yet been fully arrived at, however. The number of widows and children chargeable to the fund was still increasing, as were also disabled members. The balance-sheet showed an expenditure for the latter class alone of nearly £2,000, being an increase of nearly 25 per cent. on the previous year, and without any great extra calamity to account for such increase. With respect to the Cleveland mines, the committee had made special efforts more than once to arrive at satisfactory data as the basis of negotiation regarding terms of admission, but they had felt compelled to give further time, there not being sufficient data in existence. This could only be hoped to be obtained after the new Mines Regulation Act had been in operation a sufficient length of time to furnish proper statistical information. The report then treated on the subject of the remuneration of local committees, and next it was remarked that not one single case of arbitration had occurred during the year—a proof that there had been little or no ground for disputes in connection with the administration of the affairs of the society. The number of members who had died from accident during the year was 61, being 9 fewer than last year, and, taking the average number of

members at 27,000, giving a little over 2¼ per 1,000. 38 were married men, leaving 38 widows and 73 children ; 8 were unmarried ; and 15 were half members. 47 disabled members had been placed on the fund during the year, and 43 had gone off. 8 widows had also gone off the funds, and 22 children. The number of recipients at the end of March was as follows :—Widows, 196 ; children, 331 ; disabled 99 ; total, 626. The income of the year had been :—Contributions, £8,890 8s. ; owners' percentage, £1,608 8s. 4d. ; honorary subscriptions and interest, £514 4s. 5d. ; total income, £11,013 0s. 9d. The expenditure had been :—Single members' legacies, £184 ; married members' legacies, £190 ; half members' legacies, £180 ; widows and children's allowances, £3,983 9s. 6d. ; disabled members, £1,906 19s ; general management expenses, £720 3s. 4d. ; local expenses, £1,039 17s. 7d. ; total expenditure, £8,204 9s. 5d. ; showing a gain on the year's account of £2,808 11s. 4d ; the balance from last year being £13,431 10s. 11d., the total balance now amounted to £16,240 2s. 3d. Since the commencement of the society there had been paid to widows, children, and disabled members the sum of £31,387 12s. 3d. The income of the minor accident department had been : Contributions of members, £3,135 10s. 1d. ; entrance fees, £115 16s. ; total, £3,251 6s. 1d. The expenditure had been ; for relief, £2,284 10s. 4d. ; local expenses, £320 6s. ; total, £2,604 16s. 4d. The balance in hand on account of this fund was £678 15s. 5d.

Mr. Haswell read the following statement of the investments of the society : Cash in Backhouse's bank, £2,534 8s. 4d. ; Lambton's bank, £1,646 17s. 2d. ; with Tyne Commissioners, £4,500 ; Blyth and Tyne Railway Company, £500 ; North Eastern Railway Company, £2,340 ; Three per cent. Consols, £2,000 ; cash in deposit, £1,775 ; ditto at collieries, £995 ; total cash and investments, £16,291 5s. 6d.

A report of the Finance Committee, which had been circulated amongst the collieries, reviewed the present position of the society, and pointed out the effect which the adoption of the various proposals as to advancing the allowance to widows and children, and disabled members, the increase of pay to the various officers, and the alteration of time when the allowance should commence, would have

on the funds. The committee observed :—" After extensive inquiry, we find that the future requirements of all the widows and children now on the society would amount to £15,530, and the future claims of our present disabled members would amount to £2,000, making a total of £17,530 as the value of our existing liabilities. To meet these liabilities we have now a balance of £16,240, and assuming the rate of interest at 3½ per cent. per annum, the present value of our balance is £16,969. But our liabilities, as you see, are £17,530, being £561 less than the future requirements of our present widows, children, and disabled members. You will, therefore, perceive that the benefits cannot be increased unless the contributions be increased at the same time." They, therefore, came to the conclusion that, as there was no proposal to that effect, the alterations suggested in the propositions were not consistent with the permanent interests of the society. The closing paragraphs of this report were devoted to the position of the management fund, the expenditure for the year 1873 having, it appeared, exceeded the income by £186.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FORMATION OF ANOTHER GENERAL UNION OF THE TWO COUNTIES. OUTBREAK OF THE STRIKE FEVER IN DURHAM. PROGRESS OF THE UNION.

Having, in the last chapter, brought the history of the Permanent Relief Fund down to the present day, it is not my intention to return again to that institution, but to devote the few remaining chapters to the present union of Northumberland, and to the rise and progress of the union in Durham. The union amongst the Northumberland men having spread with comparative rapidity, it was deemed advisable to make a furthermore effort to get up another general union for the two counties of Northumberland and Durham. With this end in view, a delegate meeting was held on the 6th of June, 1863, in the Victoria Hotel, Newcastle. There were 30 delegates present, twenty-seven representing the collieries of Northumberland, and the

remaining three representing the collieries of Whitworth, Spennymoor, Washington, and Usworth, in the County of Durham. Mr. Joseph Sheldon presided over this meeting. The secretary intimated that the rules had been distributed amongst the members, at that time amounting to 4,070. Amongst the other business transacted at this meeting, it was agreed that the delegates should meet quarterly, and not half-yearly, and that district meetings should be held in the County of Durham, with a view of moving the men of that county to join with them.

Mr. Joseph Sheldon subsequently visited Washington and Usworth Collieries, when the miners employed there unanimously agreed to join the union, and to use their best efforts in getting the neighbouring collieries to join with them. There was not much difficulty in inducing men to attend the meeting, for they were at this time greatly oppressed, the yearly binding being in full force in the County of Durham. They heard of the success which had attended the efforts of the miners of Northumberland, and they readily came to the determination to join in with them, and endeavour to shake off the fetters that then bound them. In a short time a great number of collieries in Durham joined the union, and the Durham portion of it ultimately became far larger than that of Northumberland.

But, still blind to their own interests, and impatient of all delay, however necessary, the men were no sooner united than they began to strike again, even before there were any funds to support a strike with. Many seemed to imagine that the moment they joined the union a large fund would be accumulated, as if by magic, and though they had had bitter experiences of the fallacy of such a very irrational conclusion, they set the rules of the association at defiance, and ceased to work. It is no wonder, therefore, that the men found themselves beaten, as they did on the present and many subsequent occasions ; for the union which they had joined was but a shadow, and they dispersed even that before it could have time to develop into any distinct form. There were no funds in the union, and nothing, therefore, to maintain them with when out on strike, and they had, in consequence, to fall back upon the voluntary subscriptions and levies of the men. But at some of the collieries the men

did not even take the precaution to join the union before turning out on strike, and many of them struck work, and like the pilot, " trusted to Providence." A district meeting was held at Thornley, on September 12th, to induce the men of this colliery to join the union. There were about 600 present. Mr. Menomarrow presided, and earnestly appealed for every man to join the union. Inkerman Colliery, which had joined the union a short time before came out on strike for an advance of wages. A deputation of men waited on Mr. Elliot, who said he would meet the whole of the men at two o'clock, and not a deputation. The men a second time sent a deputation, when he again requested the whole of the men to meet him at the office. Thereupon the entire body of men went, and were invited into the office, and were then told by the viewer that those men who were willing to go to work should remain in the office, and those who were not might go out of the office. All the men, true to each other, at once went out of the office and left Mr. Sparks and his agents to consult together as to what was best to be done. Mr. Sparks subsequently stated to the men that those who would not work under the terms of the owners should come to the office the following day, and he would pay the wages due to them ; and accordingly the next day, the whole of the men met the cashier. He paid the wages of all the men who were not living in the colliery houses, but refused to pay those who occupied the houses. The men of Ashington Colliery, situated between Choppington and Longhirst, also came out on strike, and in the course of the strike a riot ensued. Several men were taken prisoners and tried at the Moot Hall, Newcastle.

At the next quarterly delegate meeting, which was held at the Victoria Hotel, Newcastle, it was found on the roll being called that there were 14 additional collieries in the union. At this meeting it was resolved that Mr. Crawford should act as agent and secretary, and that another agent should also be appointed. Mr. Sheldon, who had previously been engaged by the Cowpen men, was appointed to this office. The delegates also agreed that the first conference should be held in October. A committee meeting was held at Seghill on the 12th of September, to fix the different

collieries that the newly elected agents should visit for the first six weeks of their office, when Mr. Sheldon was appointed to visit the collieries in Northumberland, and Mr. Crawford the Auckland district in the County of Durham. Several active members about Spennymoor also visited the neighbouring collieries. A deputation having visited Byers Green, promised to return two days after, and arrangements were made to get up a meeting of the men to hear them. The men had a burial club at this place and used to hold their meeting for the transaction of the business of the club in Mr. R. Rhodes' long-room, where it was intended that the meeting should be held. The landlord hearing of this sent for one of the men previous to the meeting and asked what the meeting was about. On being told that it was to consider the necessity of organization for the better protection of the lives and labour of the miners, he said the men could not have the room for that purpose, and that he would send word to Spennymoor to prevent the men coming from there. This did not prevent the men from holding the meeting, for they obtained another room from Mr. Butter. The meeting was well attended and the men were unanimously in favour of the union.

A large demonstration took place at Crook on the 26th of September, at which Mr. Crawford urged the miners to unite themselves together and do away with the yearly bond. Mr. Henry Emery, of Oakenshaw, said that while they were in small items like scraps of iron they could be thrown about to any place when the owners thought proper, but now they were getting welded together into a mass, their solidity would stop them from so doing for the future. Miners in all ages had been misrepresented, but never more so than in the present day. Mr. Fletcher pointed to the practice then prevailing of fining a man 2s. 6d. for lying off work without a doctor's certificate, while at the same time the masters could lay the pit idle as long as they liked without in any way consulting the convenience of the workmen. Mr. Thomas Ramsay, an old veteran in the cause of unions, gave a sketch from the earliest days of unions amongst the miners, and said there was never a time when the miners needed unions more than at that time; whilst Mr. Patrick Doyle pictured the position of a pitman

with a wife and four or five children depending on his small earnings of from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per day. He was not exaggerating when he said this was the average wage of the district. At the same time there were writers, Dr. Wilson and others, who said that the miner's food consisted of plum pudding, roast beef, and "singing hinnies." He would leave the audience to judge how much plum pudding and roast beef there could be got out of the small earnings of the miners of Durham. Instead of roast beef and plum pudding their principal diet was coffee three times a day without sugar, and bread without butter. Mr. John Johnson, Dudley, next addressed the meeting, and quoted from the history of Solomon and David in support of combination. Mr. J. Sheldon, from Blyth, urged on the men to join the union, and induce other collieries round the district to do the same. He read a hand-bill which had been posted about Crook, headed "Pitmen, beware of men going about the country living out of you by agitation. You will compel your employers to introduce machinery to hew coals," and signed "The Pitmen's Friend." Mr. Sheldon, as a paid agent, said he was not afraid to tell them what he had for his labour, and that was 25s. per week, his own house and coals to find, and his railway fare to pay when the distance was under five miles. He concluded by moving the following resolution :—"That this meeting pledges itself to assist the cause to the utmost of their power, and to send a delegate to the next delegate meeting in Newcastle."

Mr. Crawford, who was delegated to the Auckland district, met with great success. He commenced at Spennymoor on September 21st ; Byers Green, 22nd ; and Newfield on the 23rd. The men at the latter place gave an awful account of the labours they had to perform, and the small remuneration they received for it. Mr. Crawford, in the course of his remarks, commented in strong terms on the inconsistency of Dr. Wilson, who had so falsely misrepresented the miners. "I intreat you," said he, "to determine to do something for yourselves to show to the world that you are not the degraded beings which some suppose you to be." The men took his advice in a very unanimous manner at this, and at other collieries, and not

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less than 1,200 members were enrolled in the union during the month at Cassop, Thornley, Haswell, and Trimdon collieries.

At the next quarterly delegate meeting, held in the Victoria Hotel, Newcastle, on October 3rd, four members from the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Mutual Confident Association were appointed to attend the National Conference to be held in Leeds; Messrs. N. Milburn, T. Thompson, J. Sheldon, and William Crawford, having been chosen for that purpose. It was also the opinion of the meeting that the following subjects ought to have special consideration at the conference:—(1) A better supervision of inspection, the amendment of the present Mines' Inspection Bill, and the appointment of one sub-inspector for every 4,000 men employed in coal mines in the United Kingdom. (2) That where coroners' inquests were held over persons who had lost their lives by accidents in coal mines, the jurymen on such inquests ought to be operative miners. (3) That a Ten Hours' Bill for boys in coal mines was highly necessary, and ought, by every legitimate means, to be sought for. (4) That no boy ought to descend a coal mine sooner than six o'clock in the morning. (5) That it was indispensably necessary for the safety of coal miners that only properly qualified persons should be appointed to responsible situations in coal mines, and that all agents should undergo an examination before some disinterested person competent to the task.

A very large demonstration was held at Bishop Auckland, on the same day as that on which the delegate meeting was held; and though the day was wet, there were from 5,000 to 6,000 men present. The men from Byers Green, Hunwick, and Newfield, came in a body with a flag, and were the first on the ground. The Spennymoor, Whitworth, Page Bank, and Bishop's Close men, headed by the Cassop brass band, and one large banner, walked in procession through Bishop Auckland to the place of meeting, where they were joined by 150 men from Old Etherley; whilst a large number arrived from Newton Cap, Woodhouse Close. and the neighbouring collieries. Mr. J. Johnson, Spennymoor, presided, and the speakers were G. Barker, R. Walton, R. Fox, J. Simpson, and G. Muckleroy. Mr. Barker moved

the first resolution, which was as follows :—" That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is of the utmost importance that we as miners become united for the protection of our lives and labour." He gave an account of the success of the union from its commencement, and stated that almost every colliery in Durham was in the union. Though they had thousands who had put their names down as union men, there was something more required of them. Every man must act as a union man towards each other. Mr. Robert Walton seconded the resolution, and in doing so, dwelt on the various ways in which the miners were imposed upon." George Muckleroy proposed the second resolution :—" That in the opinion of this meeting the hours of labour are too long, and we pledge ourselves to use every legal means to shorten the hours of labour, in order that we may have an opportunity of improving our minds, and educating our children." Mr. John Simpson seconded the resolution, and said the public were under the impression that boys were only 12 hours in the pits. Even if this were true, it was too long ; but he assured them that the boys where he worked were more often 14 hours in the pit than 12 ; and he believed by examining the two counties, it would be found that the same state of things existed in both, for they had to be at their work 12 hours, and it took two hours in going and coming from it in the mine. These resolutions were carried unanimously, as well as one in favour of the miners then present at once joining the union.

Another large meeting was held on the 17th October, at Tantoby, near Tanfield. Around the district of Tantoby there were a great number of small collieries, each employing from 100 to 150 men, and the workmen from these pits were nearly all present. Mr. Milburn, of Gateshead, presided, and in opening the proceedings he said that though he was glad to see the miners once more united, he at the same time was sorry to see so many of them violating the rules they had drawn up for the guidance of the society, in coming out on strike. Mr. Crawford also spoke. He said the question before them was one of great importance not only to the present generation, but also to rising generations. It was likewise a question of great magnitude, its ramifications extending as it was likely to do throughout the whole of

the British Empire. There were evils to redress, wrongs to put right, and in trying to grapple with the question in all its details, great caution and forbearance would have to be observed. And it rested with themselves whether they would be free, or continue in the position they were in. A resolution was unanimously carried pledging the constituents of the meeting to join the union, and abide by the rules of the society.

By means of such meetings a very considerable amount of good was done to the cause of unity, for there was scarce a village at which a meeting was held, in which a large number of members were not registered. The numerical strength of the union towards the end of the year was all that could be desired, but as it had just been called into existence that year there were no funds to fall back upon in case of a general dispute between the masters and the men occurring.

CHAPTER XL.

THE STRIKE AT WILLINGTON. CONDUCT OF MESSRS. STRAKER AND LOVE. EVICTION OF THE MEN. PUBLIC MEETINGS. OTHER STRIKES. FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Unhappily when everything was going on so prosperously in both counties, when unity was fast taking the place of discord and disunion, and when many thousands of men in the counties were binding themsleves together in one solid phalanx an event occurred which did much to wreck the union. This was none other than the unfortunate strike which occurred at Messrs. Straker and Love's collieries at Willington. There were other strikes in the county at the same time, but this one was the largest, and attracted the most attention. This dispute, which ultimately threw 1,200 men out of employment, occurred owing to the system which prevailed of setting out the tubs. After the tubs were filled in-bye, and were packed as close as it was possible for them to be filled in the low places in which the men had to work, they often, from the jolting in going out, were shaken down, and appeared at the bank just filled to the brim. In

order to obviate any deficiency which must arise from this cause, and result in the tub being confiscated, the men had to resort to " rocking " their tubs, an ardous and excessively painful operation. The weighman received a commission upon every tub laid out by him, and naturally enough he was only too anxious to find out " light " tubs. Matters became so very bad—the miners losing from eight to ten tubs on an average per fortnight, that they could no longer submit to such injustice and illegal treatment. They accordingly asked to have every tub that came to bank weighed, and to be paid upon the weight of coals which they sent to bank, and not upon the number of tubs. They also demanded an advance equivalent to five per cent. on the score price. These terms Mr. Love, the acting partner refused to comply with, though he agreed that the tubs should be weighed, that each should weigh 10¼ cwt., and if they did not exceed 10 cwt. they should be laid out. Mr. Love also expressed his determination not to employ again any of the men who had been connected with the proceedings he had taken at the Police Court against them. There were 6 of these "marked men" at Brandon, 12 at Oakenshaw, 4 at Sunnybrow, and 10 at Brancepeth. The number of miners belonging to the union at these collieries at the time of the strike were, Brandon 214, Oakenshaw 237, Brancepeth 518, and Sunnybrow 220. Twelve men were selected as ring-leaders, and warrants having been obtained for their apprehension they were taken from their houses in the dead hour of mid-night into custody, the crime of which they had been guilty being the terrible one of having refused to work. The people were naturally indignant at this treatment, as unnecessary as it was unjust and cruel, for a more befitting hour might easily have been selected as there was not one tittle of ground for believing that any opposition or resistance would have been offered. The men were brought before the magistrates, when Mr. Marshall, of Durham, appeared for the owners, and Mr. Bush, of Newcastle, for the men. The latter conducted the case with much ability and success. The strike began on the 16th of October, and on Tuesday, the 27th of the same month, notices were given to the men to quit their houses, some on the 28th, and some had till the 30th, allowed them to get out

of the wretched hovels that were dignified in the notices with the names of houses. On Wednesday, the 28th of October, on a raw cold foggy morning a force of sixteen policemen and twenty-four men, gathered from the common lodging houses of Newcastle and Gateshead, were marched into the village of Sunnybrow at half-past seven o'clock. There were not many people astir at that time, but the news of the invasion having quickly spread through the village the men turned out to have a look at them. They had, however, been taken to a public house where they were regaled with a substantial breakfast, and stimulated with drink in order to inspire them with Dutch courage for the task they were soon to perform. At nine o'clock the policemen and their gang of rowdies, who were called "candymen" by the pitmen and their wives, turned out in company with two young men representing the owners. These officials went into each house where notice had been given, and asked the head of the family if he would return to work on the owners' terms. As in each case a negative answer was returned, they paid the money that was due, but which was refused in one or two instances and was left lying upon the table, and then they directed the constables and men to remove the men's furniture. It is needless to say with how much roughness the articles of furniture, which in many instances it had taken years to accumulate, were handled, for the great zeal and energy of policemen in general is too well known. But exceptionally rough and brutal were the policemen and "candymen" on this occasion, for they broke and splintered the various articles, and tumbled them into the colliery carts or into the road as the case may be, as if they were heaps of rubbish rather than the much prized chattels of their fellow-creatures. Ere the sun set on that foggy, damp raw day no less than 37 familes had been turned adrift to sleep in the houses of their friends if they could, or beneath the inclement sky, with the cold wet ground beneath, and a chill wet mist dripping from the leaden clouds above. Tents and camps were hurriedly improvised in a field near, and so a boisterous night was passed, those who had to sleep in this manner rising in the morning wet and cramped. On Thursday the evicting party removed from Sunnybrow to

Oakenshaw and there with the same brutal indifference to the feelings of the poor creatures around them, they emptied the houses in the same way as at Sunnybrow on the previous day, the result of their day's labour being that 38 married men, 37 wives—some of them about to become mothers—85 children and single women, and 59 single men who were working, making a total of 219 human creatures, were turned out of house and home to seek shelter from the pelting, merciless storm wherever they could. On Friday, the 30th of October, the process of eviction was stopped, although notice had been served on many of the men to leave their houses on that day. Saturday also passed off without any more men being put out of their houses, as did also Sunday the first day of November. Monday morning, however, was so foul that even Mr. Love had not the heart to order his myrmidons to turn more of these poor wretches out. An interview between Mr. Gott, an agent of Mr. Love's, and a deputation of the workmen took place on this day, and as the men contended that the tubs were not large enough to hold the quantity they were expected to fill into them it was proposed that six tubs should be filled on the pit heap and weighed, ond an average of the whole struck, but this Mr. Gott declined to have done. The men on being informed of the result of the interview resolved to remain firm on strike, whatever might be the consequence of such a step. To make matters worse the owners forbade the poor creatures they had turned out to seek for shelter wherever they could, or to encamp in any of the fields belonging to the colliery, and notices threatening dreadful consequences to trespassers were posted all over the neighbourhood. One poor woman more bold than her neighbours, ventured on to the wagon way to pick up a little coal to warm herself by in the bitter wintry weather, and no sooner was she seen by the police, ever on the alert at persecution, than she was pounced upon ; and because she very naturally did her best to get away, she was shamefully ill-treated by those men. She was expecting every day to become a mother, but the zealous officers had no eyes to see such a condition, and (it must be written) no heart disposed to show mercy even if they had seen it. However, matters went on more

or less peacefully till the 10th of November, when Mr. Love proposed that the tubs should be sent to bank unrocked, and that the men should be paid by weight at so much per ton, but that the price per ton should be fixed upon the same basis as the score price had been. This the men refused, and on the 17th November, the candymen and policemen once more appeared in Sunnybrow and turned to the door all who still remained housed. The next day they went to Brancepeth, and did the same, and on the following day the villagers at Oakenshaw were turned adrift. At Brancepeth some of the women got rather noisy, and the men unable to bear any longer the many indignities to which they were subjected grew restive, and gave evidence of a determination to do something desperate. Indeed some riotous proceedings actually did occur, and it was deemed advisable to get the candymen out of the place with all despatch in order to save their unlucky necks from being broken. There were now some thousands of human creatures starving with cold and hunger in the fields and lanes, most of them women and children, without any adequate covering to protect them from an exceptionally severe winter.

This was the first strike that the miners had when the public press seemed to be almost unanimously in their favour, for there was scarcely a newspaper in the North of England that had one word to say on behalf of the owners, or that did not give publicity to expressions of sympathy with the men. What made the case of the owners worse, was that Mr. Love himself had been a miner, and had risen to the position he then occupied. This the men did not quarrel with, but they thought that a man who had himself laboured in the mine might be expected to show some little degree of consideration. Mr. Love also passed in the world as a benevolent and Christian man, and people could not help inquiring whether this gentlemen deemed it consistent with his profession to turn helpless women and their little ones to the door in the middle of winter. It was not under these circumstances to be wondered at that the sympathy of the public was expressed so freely in the country on behalf of the miners. Though the local press were on the side of the men, they did not say that the men were right in the course they had adopted, but maintained that they had been

unjustly treated, and were the victims of a most iniquitous system. Mr. Love felt the scathing influence of popular indignation and tried to vindicate his conduct by writing to the local papers, but he was rebuffed, and his behaviour towards his workmen and their families in the winter season of the year reviewed in a remarkably free manner, and contrasted with the teaching of that religion of which he professed to be such an ardent admirer. Mr. Love resided in a splendid stone mansion called Mount Beulah, at the outskirts of the City of Durham, and he was looked up to in Durham, where he was known as an ardent and influential Methodist. He sometimes preached himself, very frequently presided at the anniversary meetings in connection with the body; he either built, or largely helped to build, many chapels, contributed extensively to the funds of the Methodist New Connection; and was considered the prop and stay of that denomination in Durham. Now, these in themselves were very good and praiseworthy traits of character, but men began to look upon them as instances of mockery and hypocrisy, for they said, "what availeth preaching and chapel building if the first principles of Christianity are disregarded. If a man is scandalously unjust to his workmen, and will, without remorse, turn helpless families to the door, and leave them without a shelter in the middle of winter, what shall his good works avail him?" People failed to see the consistency of such acts with a profession of piety, and so they very plainly spoke their minds about Mr. Joseph Love, and remarked that such conduct brought religion into contempt.

Much public sympathy was also expressed with the unfortunate miners, and various meetings were held up and down the country for the purpose of raising funds to support the men on strike. The largest of these meetings was that held at Bishop Auckland, on Saturday, the 7th of November, when, in spite of the muddy weather thousands of men mustered. The meeting was for the purpose of discussing the principles of the union, the aspect of the existing strike, and other matters affecting the interest of the men. Banners were carried in front of the various bodies of men, many of them bearing mottoes, one of them being the following paraphrase of Coleridge's well-known lines.

"He doeth well, who doeth good,
To those of his own brotherhood,
He doeth better, who doth strive,
To keep his brethren all alive."

Mr. Johnson, of Spennymoor, occupied the chair, and the meeting was successively addressed by Messrs. George Parker, Spennymoor ; Cain Peart, Newfield ; William Dixon, West Auckland ; William Henderson, Newfield ; and George Muckleroy. Mr. Henderson, in speaking on the principles of union, said there were at that time 300,000 miners in the United Kingdom, and he had been thinking that if these 300,000 men each contributed 1s. per week for the year the sum of £750,000 would be raised. What coal-fields that would buy ? Who could compete with men in possession of such a capital as that ? But suppose these contributions were continued for five years, the capital raised would be £4,752,000, a most prodigious sum. That was what union could do, and what union would have to do sooner or later.

A meeting, called together for a similar purpose to the one above, was also held in the Lecture Room, Newcastle, on the 19th of November, when there was a large attendance and some very good speeches delivered on the various questions before the meeting. The conduct of Messrs. Straker and Love was very severely criticised at this meeting, and what was of much more practical value at that time, a very fair amount of money was contributed towards the support of the men on strike.

A strike occurred at Spennymoor Colliery, occasioned by the flagrant misconduct of a deputy overman named Parker. It appears the rope broke one morning, and the putters having been kept idle for about two hours, applied to Parker for some compensation for their lost time, to which he answered "ye'll be asking for all the pit the noo." They went to their work, but with a very discontented spirit, and about eight o'clock they resolved so knock off unless they got some satisfaction. They saw Parker again and he was very insolent, on which they all left and came out-bye. When they were in the cage and about to ride he said to them "aw'll scumfish ye all," meaning he would stifle them. He rapped for the brakesman to draw up the cage, and when it was about half-way up he signalled for it to be

stopped. The cage was stopped right in the centre of the shaft, just immediately above where the heat and smoke of three furnaces had their vent into the shaft. The men accordingly demanded that a man who could be guilty of such conduct should be discharged, and as this simple act of justice was denied them they struck work, and remained out. On the 11th of November, they were turned out of their houses to keep company with Messrs. Straker and Love's men at Brandon, Brancepeth, Sunnybrow, and Oakenshaw.

Several other strikes occurred about this time, one of them being at Page Bank, where the men refused to work if a man of the name of Marks was retained ; one at Beamish and Pelton for higher wages ; and one at Medomsley for a similar reason.

The first National Conference, which had been looked forward to with great anxiety by the miners, took place on Monday, the 9th November, when delegates from nearly all the coal-mining districts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, upwards of 50 in number, assembled at the Co-operative Hall, Leeds, for the purpose of considering the condition of the miner, and how it was to be improved. Mr. Joseph Sheldon, Mr. William Crawford, Mr. Thomas Thompson, Mr. N. Milburn, and Mr. John Hunter, represented Northumberland and Durham at the conference. The representative from Scotland, Mr. A. Macdonald, moved " that the conference meet on the following Tuesday under three sections :—(1) For the consideration of the grievances of the miner ; (2) for discussing the state of the law ; and (3) for the consideration of questions of social economy in which the miner was interested. Mr. John Towers was elected general secretary of the conference ; Mr. McDonald, chairman ; and Mr. William Pickard, of Ince, vice-president. The following persons were elected chairmen and secretaries of the different sections. Law :—Mr. William Crawford, Northumberland, chairman ; and Thomas Hickam, Kidsgrove, Staffordshire, secretary. Grievance :—Mr. William Henry Miller, Dudley, chairman ; and Mr. John Farrell, Corbridge, Staffordshire, secretary. Social organisation :—Mr. William Brown, Hunslet, chairman ; and David Thorn, Leeds, secretary. Mr. William Crawford proposed a Ten

Hours' Bill for boys, and one of eight hours for men. This was seconded by Mr. Sheldon, but after a long discussion it was put, when only three hands were held up for it. In the grievance department, Mr. N. Milburn, on behalf of himself and brother-delegates from Northumberland and Durham, handed in the following statement of grievances :—"That the present system of laying-out miners' coals, as carried out in Northumberland and Durham district, is considered to be confiscation, and ought therefore to be abolished ; that the provisions of the present Mines' Inspection Act are too generally neglected ; that employers do not employ officials in mines where safety lamps are in use, without having due regard to the qualifications of such officials ; that the system of separating coals in the screens at bank, as practised in some of the collieries of the Marchioness of Londonderry, is a very great cause of complaint ; and that another grievance in Northumberland and Durham is the paying of a certain score price to a man working nine days, but if a man work ten or eleven days, he is paid an extra price." It was stated at this conference that there should be a " National Emergency Labour Fund," left under the control of the districts in which it was raised.

This conference sat seven days, and discussed many important subjects relating to the miners ; but, notwithstanding this, the proceedings did not give satisfaction to the general body of miners, and more particularly was this dissatisfaction expressed in Durham. It had been held out to the men by some of the advocates that if they only joined the union, along with the National Association, there would at once be an end to all their grievances, and that everything that was wanted would be got. Unfortunately, there were too many ignorant men ready to swallow such extravagant statements, but hundreds did not believe them, nor did they appreciate this misleading mode of advocacy. As a natural consequence, those who had hoped great things from the union, when they were disappointed, began to leave it. One result of this disaffection was that Mr. Towers, who had been very popular in the North of England amongst the miners, began to decline in popularity, and what was still worse for the interests of the society, Sheldon and he, who had been great friends from the first, now had a serious difference, and

resorted to making grave charges against each other's public and private characters. Towers, the secretary of the National Association, secretary of the conference, and the editor of *The Miner : and Workman's Advocate,* was openly accused of dishonesty ; and though he had succeeded in a very short time in creating thousands of friends, he, by some means or other, had double that number of enemies in less time than it had taken him to make his friends. Well might he exclaim with the poet :—

> " Former gatherings and rash acquaintance
> Have led to ruin and sad repentance."

A Committee of the National Conference was appointed to hear the grievances of the miners of Northumberland and Durham ; but this committee soon found out that the task that the association had put upon them was more than they could carry out. At a meeting which they held in the Victoria Hotel, Newcastle, on the 12th December, the following resolution was passed :—" This committee are of opinion that there seems too great readiness, in many instances, to bring matters prematurely before this committee. We therefore think there is a necessity for all collieries to exhaust every proper means within their power before troubling the general committee, as such conduct will lead to most unpleasant and unnecessary disputes between the Coal Trade and this committee. Also we must, as a committee, insist upon all parties attending to the general rules in all cases, and those who do not, their case will not be taken up."

Great numbers of men were now getting their notices for taking an active part in the union ; and each week, more collieries were coming out on strike. The whole trade, throughout the County of Durham, was in a very disordered state, and much privation was felt by large numbers of men, and their families. The winter was very severe and trying, and many men were anxious to be at work again. They accordingly began to drop off from the union, one by one, and then in pretty considerable batches. With the hope of counteracting this, a district delegate meeting was held on December 19th, at Bishop Auckland, Mr. John Howie presided. There was only one colliery out of the thirty-three

in the district that was not represented, and this was South Durham. The following resolution was unanimously passed: "That this meeting considers there was never greater necessity for union amongst the miners than at the present day. We, therefore, deprecate every action which may have a tendency to cause disunion amongst us, let it come from whatever quarter it may."

CHAPTER XLI.

AGITATION IN DURHAM AGAINST THE YEARLY BOND. DISPUTES AMONGST THE LEADERS OF THE MEN. ATTACK ON MR. ROBERTS. DEATH OF THOMAS HEPBURN.

The year 1864 opened on anything but a bright prospect for the miners of Northumberland and Durham, and especially for those of the latter county, for a greater proportion of the men were out on strike, many of them were houseless and starving, disaffection and disorganization were fast spreading amongst them, and a strong repugnance to the yearly bond was rapidly growing up all over the district. On the 9th January, 1864, a large demonstration took place on the Newcastle Town Moor, when the abolition of the yearly bonds in the County of Durham was brought forward. and a resolution, pledging the employment of all legitimate measures to obtain the discontinuance of this distasteful system, was unanimously adopted. Mr. Holmes, of Leeds, spoke at this meeting, and threw out some valuable suggestions for the amelioration of miners as a class, and inculcated the duty of union and co-operation. Mr. Smith, of Crook; Joseph Sheldon, Blyth; Mr. Gammage, Sunderland; Mr. William Grieves and Mr. Muckleroy also addressed the meeting.

As the yearly bindings were beginning to draw near, the men in Durham became very much agitated. Several collieries passed resolutions of restriction, and looked upon others as "blacklegs" who did not do the same. Others turned their attention to the question of raising the means for men to emigrate, in order to remove some of the superabundant labour in the country. At a deleagte meeting held at Bishop Auckland, on the 30th January, it was

resolved : " That all men who were ' sacrificed ' for taking an active part in the union whould be entitled to the first claims upon the funds of the society if they chose to emigrate, but should there be more ' victimised ' than the funds would send out, they should be balloted for, and those who were left were to have the chance of the next ballot drawn."

Never was a strong union more necessary than at this moment, and yet, unfortunately, the leaders of the union began to set a bad example at quarrelling, a practice which was not without its evil influence in the various local societies.

At a meeting of the Council of the Miners' National Association, held in Leeds, in February, it was stated that the Kelloe district having got into a quarrel with their executive council, wished to join the National Association, because they expected to get support in strikes, and on other occasions, for the payment of one penny per man per month. Mr. Pickard also remarked that they wanted to send sixpence to get £5 back ; whilst Mr. Mitchell clinched the whole by saying their house was on fire, and they wanted to insure in the National Office. These remarks naturally gave considerable offence to the men of Kelloe, and the following reply was sent to the council, by direction of a special meeting :—

Sir.—At a delegate meeting of the Thornley district, held at the Queen's Head Inn, Coxhoe, Saturday, March 5th, I, as chairman of the above meeting, was requested to write to " The Miner " newspaper to refute the libellous and unwarrantable statement of Joseph Sheldon, at the Leeds Council, with regard to the Kelloe district. Mr. Sheldon said at that assembly, that the Kelloe men had got into a quarrel with their Executive Council, and now they wished to join the National Association because they expected to get support in strikes, and on all other occasions, for the payment of one penny per month.

Now, Mr. Sheldon, I beg to inform you, and all who have read the above paragraph in *The Miner*, that your statement was a base falsehood ; in fact, the words spoken by you from beginning to end are as false as ever were published. I am instructed by my brother delegates to say that we never had the slightest difference with our Executive Council, nor are we wishful to do anything that may cause us to be disunited ; but my opinion, and the opinion also of parties better versed in such important matters, is that there never will be a perfect understanding in any country where there are two crowned heads, as has been proved by experience. Therefore we, as a body

of delegates, think that the present union cannot be carried on in a friendly and amicable spirit as long as there are two councils.

But, Mr. Editor, if we overstepped the bounds of our duty and general rules, was it not Mr. Sheldon's duty, as a paid servant of the miners, to try and put us right, instead of laying such an unfounded and malicious accusation against us ? We had not the most remote intention to strike ; and it is an absurdity to think that we could expect to be supported, if we were so unfortunate as to be compelled to strike, for the payment of one penny per month.

We called a special delegate meeting at Durham, on January 2nd, for that county alone, to adopt some plan to abolish the yearly bindings. That appears to have given offence to Sheldon and Co. ; for at a general delegate meeting held in the Town Hall, Durham, on the 19th ult., there was a resolution passed :—" That this meeting exonerates the Thornley district from all blame, but in future to abide by their Executive Council." So much for Joseph Sheldon and the manner in which he represented us at the last council meeting.

One or two words to Richard, of Barnsley, not forgetting friend Pickard. The latter gentleman used all the sarcasm he was master of in a few words, when he said " it was sending 6d. to get £5 back." Never mind, Mr. Pickard ; I will treat your scoffing with the contempt it deserves.

But Mitchell cast them all in the shade when he said our house was on fire, and we wanted to insure in that office. Richard, read the leading article in *The Miner* of March the 5th, and there you will see an item of £32 16s. 2d. From that you can see whose house is likely to want the assistance of the fire brigade, yours or ours.

Yours truly,

JOHN SMITH,

Chairman to the delegates of the Thornley district.

Coxhoe, March 7th, 1864.

Whilst the men in charge of affairs were bickering amongst themselves the miners at Willington were starving, with no prospect of being able to get work again at the colliery, as their places were rapidly being filled by " blacklegs." It was, however, considered that something should be done towards putting a limitation to their miseries, and at a quarterly delegate meeting held on Friday, March 4th, in the Town Hall, Durham, and at which upwards of 100 delegates were present, the following resolutions were adopted :—1st, " That 2s. per man be paid towards assisting the men on strike at Willington to emigrate, the men to be supported in the meantime, any surplus being left to go to the emigration society." 2nd, " That the general committee choose two of their members to make all arrangements for the emigration of the Willington men."

It was further resolved, "That a petition, asking the coal owners to abolish the yearly bindings be printed and sent to the coal trade, and that the executive committee watch the proceedings most narrowly with respect to bonds; and whenever anything occurs in connection with such bonds, the general secretary be written to stating the circumstances so as to enable the committee to take the best possible steps; but in the meantime let every miner in these two counties discountenance by every means in his power, the yearly or that kind of monthly bond named in the petition. And we strongly recommend all men to stay at their own collieries during the bindings."

A strike took place at Ravensworth colliery, at the latter end of February, and a deputation from the union waited on Mr. Burdon, at his residence in Newcastle, with a view to settle the difference between them, when they were informed that he positively refused to see them. In March the men of Seghill colliery also struck work for an advance. The Steam Coal Association held meetings to consider the demands made by the men, when it was determined to resist the demands the men were making. A call was made on the owners' association to raise a large sum of money, and it was agreed to support those collieries that might be stopped work in consequence of the demands of the men.

April being the time when the yearly bonds were entered into in the county of Durham, it had been anticipated that in this month there would be a great struggle between labour and capital in Durham; but the nearer this period approached less fear was there of anything of the sort. The men were rapidly becoming disorganized and falling out amongst themselves, and worse than all the National Conference that was called into existence in November to put an end to all strife, in the place of healing old wounds only aggravated them more, and produced numerous fresh ones. Towers and his party, who had been the means of establishing the National Association and the National Conference, were now prohibited from going into the conference room and from taking any part in its deliberations. The conference also shut out the representatives of the press, and employed a special reporter of their own, and even went the length of prohibiting all reporters from *The Miner*, a

step which could not fail to bring upon them the suspicion of their contemporaries. The miners of the north were really offended, and some lengthy letters were written, condemning the council for their secrecy. Mr. McDonald, in defence of the conference, wrote the following letter to *The Miner*, explaining why they had employed a special reporter :—

Sir.—In a leading article in your journal of the 5th inst., you pass a mild censure on the council for having employed a reporter to report their proceedings. You think they might have left the reporting to the press, and thereby have saved the expense of two guineas per day. The council, as far as I have seen them, would do anything to save the outlay of money for any unnecessary purpose, but they were afraid longer to trust the press in giving a full report of all their doings, and they deemed that these fully required, at the last council meeting, a proper report. The council felt deeply grateful, as members of conference, for the excellent reports that appeared in several journals of the deeply interesting proceedings of that body during its sittings in Leeds in November, 1863. They, however, were then well aware (and are so now) that all the proceedings of the conference were not published in any paper ; that important votes, resolutions, and divisions on certain subjects were not even hinted at, which if they had been, would, I believe, have saved much of the language that has been used against the council. The points thus omitted by the press, to which I have alluded, might seem not to be of general interest, yet I hold they were of vital importance in keeping the delegates sent to the conference right with their constituents, and ought to have been made fully known to keep the council right with the various districts. Again, the council met in December, their first meeting, and at that meeting not a single member of the press made appearance, not even from The Miner, and the work of reporting was left to any individual of the council who chose to take notes of its proceedings and send them to the press. These at best, however, were mere extracts. Under these circumstances, the council determined they should have no uncertain sounds of their proceedings on the last occasion ; hence their appointing a reporter. They wanted all their records to go to their constituents officially, so that should they receive them for their guidance, they would really understand what they were. These your numerous correspondents could either accept or condemn. As an individual, my desire was and is to have all our actions made known to the miners of Great Britain through various mediums. If these give satisfaction to them, let us enjoy their confidence. If on the other hand, they do not give satisfaction, let us be removed, sent to the right-about, and other good and true and trusty men be put in our places. We do not plead for place—we do not plead for power—we only wish to try and do our best for the interest of the poor miner—his little boys, his outraged daughters. Some of us could speak of " railway travelling," of " nights on the railway," and such mean dodges to curry favour or cause the cry of " Martyr ! " to be raised. I think, however, I am warranted in saying for the whole

council, that they as a body, and as individuals, would scorn to stoop so low as to address to rational and intelligent men such twaddle. Trusting that the explanations now given for our hiring a special reporter will satisfy your numerous correspondents and yourself.

I remain, yours truly,

ALEXANDER M'DONALD,

President of the Miners' National Council.

Holytown, March 14th, 1864.

The Editor of *The Miner* inserted this letter in his paper, but tacked the following foot note on to it :—

Accepting Mr. M'Donald's explanation as regards the appointment by the council of a *special* reporter, still we are not informed why the press was excluded. Mr. M'Donald says that at a previous meeting not a single member of the press made appearance, not even from *The Miner*. We did not hear of the meeting till it was over ; hence we were not there. Mr. M'Donald says, " he desires all the actions of the council made known to the miners of Great Britain through various mediums." If so, why was the press excluded ? To both Houses of Parliament the press is admitted. Through the press the debates in Parliament are made known to the world. Why, then, should the press have been excluded from the meeting of the Miners' Council at Leeds ?

In the same issues of *The Miner*, in which the above appeared, there was a leading article, which, after stating a number of charges against the Executive Council of the National Association, thus concludes :—

And such, in addition to every kind of insult that malice, jealousy, and envy can inspire, is the treatment we have received at the hands of men who were brought by us from their native obscurity into place and power. Miners and ironworkers, what say you to this ? You remember how Mr. Richard Mitchell served us ? He has met with *worthy* coadjutors ; but you will not give expression to your opinions as regards these plotters—men who, but for the position in which, by an accident, they have been placed, would be far too insignificant to notice ? Less than two years ago you had no journal. Even Mitchell was unable to persuade the local journals to publish his communications. Less than two years ago you had no organization. You were defenceless, and would have remained so but for us. Where were the members of the council then ? How is it that some of these wonderful friends to the poor miner did not supply the want that had been so long felt ? No, no ! To do so would have cost money, and they do not agree with the doctrine that it " is more blessed to give than to receive." Such was the state of things less than two years ago, and how is it to-day ? You have a journal ; you have an organization. *Might* can no longer overcome *Right*. You have had through us a Conference at Leeds, and we only deplore it has not been attended with more beneficial results. You have through us a council which was appointed to guard your

interests, but which is busy in looking after its own, and it is this council which is endeavouring to crush your organ, as they would crush you, were you in the way of their selfish ends. We shall say no more on this subject now—we know the parties and shall not lose sight of them. We are confident in your *justice*, and, relying on it, we seek not the tender mercies of the Miners' National Council ; thank God their days are numbered, and another Conference is at hand ! We only trust that good men will be sent to that Conference ; that a council will be elected in which all can place confidence—one which, animated by the sole desire of doing good, will put an end to the unseemly strife that has existed from the moment the present was called into existence."

This of itself was bad enough in all conscience, in the presence of difficulties which threatened the very existence of the union, but worse than all this was a cowardly and unmanly attack that was made upon Mr. W. P. Roberts, who was known throughout the whole of the mining districts of England as the "Pitmen's Attorney General." Those who have known Mr. Roberts from the outset of his connection with the miners until its close, know how to appreciate his honesty and manly character, and it is only those whose knowledge of his real character is a nullity, and who are morbidly suspicious of every good man, who could take any part in assailing him. The most galling part of the matter was that a charge of interested motives came from the very men he had laboured so disinterestedly all his life to raise. They charged him with wanting to extort money from the miners, when the fact was that the miners never did, nor never could, pay him one tithe of what they were indebted to him for the many valuable services he had rendered them. When he took the men of Thornley from prison in Durham with a writ of *habeas corpus*, to the Queen's Bench in London, and brought them all back free men, the gratitude of the miners of the north, burst forth in pleasing spontaneity ; for they dragged the carriage through the streets in which he rode, and cheered and feted him like a hero returned from a war. Probably Mr. Roberts felt himself well paid for his trouble by this exuberant gratitude, he was a man who loved to be thought well of by his fellow men, but how much in hard cash did he put into his pocket over the transaction ? Will any of his detractors say that he was anything like adequately paid for his labours by the miserable fees which he charged ?

In his latter days when he was getting old and feeble, but still anxious to serve the miners, instead of giving him an opportunity of doing so, they ungraciously turned their backs upon him, and added to the injury they had done, an unmerited insult. Well might Mr. Roberts, adopting the lines of Amiens, exclaim—

> "Blow, blow, thou wintry wind,
> Thou art not so unkind
> As man's ingratitude."

The way in which this charge against Mr. Roberts of taking money from the miners and doing nothing for it, came about, was as follows. At the National Conference which was held in May, 1854, at Leeds, the question of appointing a stipendiary legal adviser to the miners was brought forward by Mr. D. R. Thomas, of Wales, who moved that Mr. Roberts receive the appointment. In making the proposition he said the people of South Wales looked upon Mr. Roberts with very great regard, as his was the only counsel they could get or rely upon. Their men had declared that they would rather pay 1s. towards the stipend of Mr. Roberts than a penny towards that of any other gentleman. Mr. Howie, from Durham, moved as an amendment that the Conference decline to interfere in the question ; and he went on to state it was his strong impression that it was money alone Mr. Roberts wanted. He cared not so much for the benefit of the miners as for the £ s. d. which he derived from them. On the question being submitted to the meeting, there were 39 hands held up for Mr. Howie's amendment, and only 2 for Mr. Thomas' motion. The Northumberland and Durham men were exceedingly indignant at the decision of the council, and more especially at the disrespectful way in which Mr. Howie had spoken of Mr. Roberts. There were thousands of men in the two counties who knew the good services he had rendered them in days gone by. Mr. Howie, however, from that day sunk in the estimation of the miners of the North of England, and was allowed to take no more part in public affairs till Mr. Blyth, the secretary of the Permanent Fund, procured him an appointment to lecture on the advantages of the Permanent Relief Fund. He is now the president of that prosperous and useful fund, and no doubt he has regretted having spoken

so harshly against one of the best friends that ever the miners had. After publicity had been given to many false accusations and slanderous letters, Mr. Roberts wrote the following :—

FRIENDS.—I am told that it has been reported through your local papers, and by means of some of the now leading men of your association, who have laid base and false accusations to my character, that during the time I was engaged by you as your legal adviser I was absent from my work three months at a time. If such a report has been made, I pronounce it to be a foul and audacious lie. I challenge the slanderers to adduce one tittle of evidence in proof of their assertions, and I will meet them at any time or place, and in any mode that they like, and convict them of being malignant and malicious slanderers. During the time I was with you, my day never began later than seven o'clock, and seldom closed before midnight. My days—you know all of this—were full of work, from morning till night. Once only during the whole time was I absent (except in London or elsewhere on your business, and by your direction) and that once was for a week only, and in consequence of a death in my family which I was compelled to attend ; but during that week I paid another attorney for doing what he could of my work. But that is not all. After my time with you had expired, I remained with you—sometimes going to Manchester—for considerably more than six months ; throughout that time doing the same work, attending inquests, meetings, disputes, before the magistrates, &c., the same as before with this difference, however, that I was not paid at all, not even any expenses out of pocket. True, I liked the work, I was youug and hearty and my efforts were successful. Thousands, as I drove along, came out to bless me ; the homage was more than agreeable—it was intoxicative ; and though I was in constant dread of violence, I was never so happy, and never should be so again. The Thornley case—when I took six prisoners to London and brought them back free—was rather exciting at the time, and something to think upon now. I write this letter not only for its immediate purpose, but to say that if at any time you desire me to give you any information about anything—what I eat, drink, or did, what I paid, what I was paid, how I lived and where I went—anything in fact, and will write me a line of inquiry, I will at once clear up any doubt or difficulty, either by a private letter or a letter in *The Miner*, or in any other newspaper, excluding, of course, such as live by slandering me. I cannot indeed notice every lie—the liars are too numerous—but I will crush a few now and then.

Believe me, ever your friend.

WILLIAM PROWTING ROBERTS.

44 Princess Street, Manchester.

The mention here of Mr. Roberts' name reminds me that in the summer of this year died Mr. Thomas Hepburn,

one of the men who led the miners in their earlier struggles for emancipation, and to whom more than to any other single man is due, the reduction which took place in the hours of labour. I have, before narrating the events in which he took such an active part, referred to this truly great man, but there is no connected story of his life given there. Mr. Hepburn was a pitman in the county of Durham, and first took a leading position amongst his fellow men in the formation of the union amongst the miners in 1831. This union brought round one of the greatest reforms for the social comfort and elevation of the mining class, viz. :—the shortening of the hours of labour in the mines from 17 to 12 hours a day. Hepburn was not only a great leader amongst the miners, but his sympathies extended to the broad platform of politics. He was a man with a strong constitution, an intelligent mind, active and ever ready to lend a hand to any movement that had for its object the elevation of the people. He suffered a great deal in 1832, 1833, and following years, but still he was not disheartened. He was one of the most active men of the Chartist agitation. Fergus O'Connor, speaking of him, said, "he is a noble specimen of human nature, and the people of the North of England have a right to be proud of such a man." He was not only a powerful speaker at meetings, but his ability and suggestive mind won him the highest respect amongst those with whom he worked. When the miners' union was broken up he spent a number of the remaining years of his laborious and useful life in agitating for Parliamentary Reform, and in educating the young ones with whom he came in contact. He travelled long distances on many a dreary night, and addressed meetings to advocate the political rights of the people, advising his hearers to get knowledge. He taught and illustrated the great truth by his argument, that if the people of England once demanded their rights, no Government could withhold them. In April, 1839, when the Chartist movement was in its greatest height of agitation in the North of England, and had for its objects—universal suffrage, annual parliaments, vote by ballot, no property qualification for members of parliament, the payment of representatives, and equal electoral districts ; while it had for its leaders in the north, Doubleday, Larkin,

Grey, Blakey, and others, Hepburn, the pitman's leader, associated with these men. On April 20th, 1839, a great meeting was held on the Town Moor, Newcastle, to consider what course should be adopted in case Government rejected 'the people's charter.' Thomas Hepburn was in the chair. His eloquence and ability inspired the people on that day, and established him as a great favourite amongst the Chartist agitators. The principal speakers there were, Mr. Ayre, Mr. Blakey, Mr. Harney, Mr. Devyr, Mr. Lowery, Dr. Taylor, and others, but Mr. Hepburn, the great man who had led the miners, was the only one who volunteered to oppose John Fife with the special constables, when the Riot Act was read over four times, and prevented them from holding their meetings. He stood on the wall, where the Catholic Church now stands, and shouted out with his strong, clear, distinct voice, "John Fife, Mayor of Newcastle, I tell you your proclamation is no law. You have no right to prevent us from holding our meetings." Sir John Fife was knighted soon after this. After the great strike of 1832, Mr. Hepburn had some difficulty in obtaining a livelihood, for by his zeal in the cause of the miners he had got himself into the "black books" of the masters. However as elsewhere stated, Mr. Forster, the viewer at the Felling colliery, gave him work at that place, where he worked for some years. His health failed him, which prevented him from following his employment, and had it not been for his affectionate daughter and son-in-law, he would have had to finish his days in the workhouse. He died a few years ago in a public-house in the Side, Newcastle, the sign of the "Old Brandy Butt," kept by his son-in-law. His remains were interred at Heworth, and there were few, if any, but his own relatives who followed him to the grave. Several of the good people now living in the Side well remember the doting old man who used to lounge about the "Old Brandy Butt," but none of them recognized in the wreck the great man whose name had been on every tongue a few short years before, and who could influence, as no other man then living could do, the thousands of rough ignorant miners of the two large coal producing counties of Northumberland and Durham. Peace to his ashes!

CHAPTER XLII.

THE YEARLY BOND IN DURHAM CONTINUED. SECESSION OF NORTHUMBERLAND FROM THE DURHAM UNION. THE CRAMLINGTON STRIKE. THE NORTHUMBERLAND UNION. APPOINTMENT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE. THE ATTACK ON MR. BURT.

Whilst the men were fighting amongst themselves, the well-known fable was practically illustrated, for the owners stepped in with their yearly bond, and had little difficulty in inducing the men to be bound. Love's collieries were at full work with fresh hands, together with those who had broke away from their own ranks; and though there had been a resolution passed at the delegate meeting that 2s. per man should be levied to assist those men to emigrate, this was not carried out, many of the men refusing to pay it. Great numbers of men now left the union, and it was evident that those who stuck to the resolutions not to bind at collieries would not get the chance of working upon any terms if they did not look sharp, as many of the owners had their collieries filled up, and refused large numbers of their old hands. The manner in which the bindings were effected on this occasion will be seen from the following letter :—

SIR.—Allow me a space to let other collieries know how they have got on with the binding at Haswell. The first point was, the masters got all the deputies, stonemen, and a few coal hewers bound two or three days before the binding day, which is a fortnight sooner than it has ever been. The next was, they had a few men set as soon as the bond was read over to make a rush in; but it was all a puff, for the men had settled it at the meeting. As soon as the bond was read they retreated to the union room to consider whether to bind or not, and came to the conclusion that, as the masters had the strongest party bound, they were not in a good position for a strike, and considered they might as well bind. Haswell union has had traitors at its head; I will give you a specimen. The first was the president; the master bribed him with a bottle of whisky, and stone work, and told him to break the union up if he could; he tried very hard till they put him out. The next was the secretary, and he sold the masters the books for drink, who kept him with drink a whole week for them. The next was a delegate; all the men put their trust in him, and thought if there was a trusty man in the union he was one, for he had always proved true till lately; the masters promised him some work, and he gave up the delegate's place without any notice to the meeting. He has never been at a meeting since. I leave you to judge how the union has been kept at Haswell. Now for the

THOMAS BURT.

advance. The five-quarter seam 1s. per score, another 9d. per score if the miner makes £2 5s., and 1s. 3d. per score if he makes £2 10s., which no man can make. In the Hutton seams they advance 4d. per score in the Crimea district, and nothing in the other districts, except the Driftway, where they give 6d. per score.

The disunion which was now beginning to appear amongst the men is evidenced in the above letter, and receives full corroboration in the following from Brandon :—

SIR.—Please insert a few lines respecting rumours raised against the late secretary of Brandon colliery. I shall be happy to meet any one to prove it, either at John Longstaffe's, Silver Street, Durham, or at Cuthbert Earington's, Framwellgate Moor. Then the public shall judge whether I have, or ever had, any money. It is reported that I kept £30. All the money I ever got was 6s., which I received in the end of the same week that the men went away to work ; and I would like to know where there is a man who would have delivered it up when the men broke away as they did ? When the Union commenced every man passed his word to stand firm till they all got their work. Now I was kept out—I was not to start any more. Was I then right or wrong to keep the 6s. ? Those who say most ought to say least. I should like to know what came of the money gathered at Ryhope, and where the tent money is ? Can they call themselves union men when they sold the tent even while two or three families were occupying it ? I think there is little union in them, or they might have stood for twelve months the way they were supported. Many a poor man gave his shilling for them when he wanted it at home. And then to go in as they have ! If I were like them I would never mention union more.

The men of Northumberland, who had remained firmly attached to their union throughout, were dissatisfied at the way the Durham men were proceeding, for they felt certain that, sooner or later, they would break up the union. The Northumberland men held a district meeting at Plessey on the subject. After the meeting a delegate meeting was held to devise the best means of keeping the union in existence. Mr. Thomas Burt, who is now so widely known as the intelligent agent of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association, was then working at Choppington, and represented this colliery at the meeting as their delegate. He proposed the following resolution :—" That the miners of Northumberland secede from the Durham miners, and establish a union of their own ; and that the union have for its name—' The Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association.' " This was at once unanimously agreed to, and the proposition met with favour amongst the whole of

the men of the county. There were two agents connected with the association at the time—Mr. Crawford, the general secretary ; and Mr. Sheldon, the agent. The men unanimously agreed to engage Mr. Crawford as their secretary and agent, and Mr. Sheldon was turned over to the County of Durham men. However, the engagement of the latter did not last long, as the men had all given up the union.

Mr. Crawford filled his office with great ability until June, 1865, and made himself a great favourite in Northumberland ; but he then left the Association in order to take the secretaryship of the Cowpen Co-operative Store at Blyth. When Mr. Crawford resigned, there were many candidates for the secretaryship. Mr. Burt, though only a young man, was strongly recommended by the Choppington men, and by other influential gentlemen who were interested in the union, and, ultimately he was appointed by a large majority, at a delegate meeting held at the Astley Arms, Seaton Delaval, on the 15th July, and commenced his labours on the 14th of August, 1865.

About the middle of June in this year the workmen engaged at Cramlington Colliery made application for an advance of score price, amounting to about one penny, and, in some cases, twopence per ton, in order to place them on an equal footing in regard to wages with the other men of the district. The men struck work on their demand being refused, and subsequently the question was referred to Messrs. J. R. Liddell and George Hirst ; and these referees suggested that one penny advance might be conceded if the men would nick the coal. The men, however, were in no humour to nick the coal, or to take the concession limited or hampered by any conditions, and they at once struck work, and determined to remain out till what they asked for was granted. For some time things went on very quietly. When Mr. Burt assumed control of the affairs of the union, the strike had already lasted eight weeks, and gave promise of lasting twice as long. The financial state of the society was not a flourishing one by any means, as all the cash the men then had in hand did not amount to more than £23 3s. 2d., and this with 500 or 600 men out on strike at one of the largest collieries in Northumberland. But with his mild, straightforward, and well-developed mind, Mr. Burt

boldly grappled with the adverse circumstances surrounding him, and very soon made it apparent to his constituents that they had chosen the right man for the difficult situation he had entered upon. For some time all went quietly enough at Cramlington, but when the pits had lain idle for nearly sixteen weeks, notices were served upon most of the men that they would have to vacate their houses within a given time. Though many had been expecting this, the notice caused considerable alarm, and efforts were made to bring about a reconciliation between employers and men. The masters had offered to have a second examination of the colliery by arbitrators, if the men would commence work pending that investigation ; and this question was submitted to a largely-attended meeting of delegates held at the Astley Arms, Seaton Delaval, on Tuesday, the 10th of October. The delegates, however, decided to leave it to the men of Cramlington to say whether they would resume work on these conditions, and a meeting of the men on strike was called at the same place on the following morning, when it was decided not to commence work again till the full terms demanded were conceded. The owners considered it necessary to bring the matter to a climax, and a number of "candy-men" were introduced into the village almost immediately after the decision of the men was given, and imperatively ordered to clear all the houses of the miners marked with a cross. The house of Mr. Thomas Baulks, the treasurer of the association was selected as the most fitting place to inaugurate this unfeeling work. The morning was wet, a heavy shower of rain was pelting down, and the roads about the houses were black and boggy. When the "candy-men" reached the house of "Tommy Baulks," as the men familiarly termed him, and drove his wife and children crying out into the rain and mire, the pitmen, crowding round, grew very savage, and commenced hooting and yelling at them in a very wrathful manner. But the "candy-men," who cared nothing for hooting and yelling, continued to bring out the goods and chattels contained in the cottages—on which the men could no longer contain themselves, but made a general onslaught on these beggarly rascals. The poor wretches, once in the grasp of the Northumberland miners, changed very suddenly, and from

the insolent tones which they had formerly adopted towards the men, they now begged for mercy in a most pitiable and craven manner. Many of them made all the haste they could back to Newcastle, and could on no account be persuaded to return. The police interfered to prevent the "candy-men" being ill-treated, and many of them got very considerably mauled. The men were desperate and cared very little what they did; but they were aggravated to a very great extent by the insolence of the evicting party, who, not content with entering the houses, and turning the inhabitants and their furniture to the doors, misbehaved themselves in a hundred different ways, such as drinking milk and eating food which they found in some of the cottages, and on one occasion emptying some dirty slops out of a jug on to a mother and her children. On the Thursday the evictions were continued, and a scene of indescribable confusion prevailed. A number of police were mounted, for what purpose it would be difficult to determine, and as most of the riders were inexperienced horsemen, they of themselves created not a little disorder. But when the "candy-men" began to turn women and children and furniture out of doors in their reckless and indifferent manner, a number of the young women got "blazers"—pieces of sheet iron used as blasts to draw up the fire—and, accompanying their shrill treble yelling with an incessant and discordant banging on these iron plates, they created a perfect panic. The terrified horses of the policemen plunged and kicked, the pitmen shouted and yelled, and rushed hither and thither, hooting and pelting the "candy-men" and police; and in fact a perfect riot prevailed. Stones at one time flew almost as thick as hail, and a number of "candy-men," chased out of one house ran to another for shelter, but found it barricaded on the inside. The inmates were summoned to open it, but they refused; and even when the proprietors of the colliery came, they still defied them. The officials, fearing some disastrous result, got the "candy-men" off safe, and hurried then by a special train to Newcastle. The evictions were now suspended for a time, but early on the following Sunday morning, when the inhabitants of Cramlington village arose, they learned that a large number of policemen had been in the place long before

daylight, and had borne several of their comrades away in custody to the Moot Hall. A meeting of the delegates of the union was held on the following Wednesday, when the proceedings of the men were severely censured, and they were advised to maintain a peaceful attitude in future, and to leave their doors open. The place continued to be under the guard of a large force of police, who patrolled the village both night and day. On Tuesday, the 17th of October, a detachment of the 64th Regiment arrived in Newcastle from Manchester, under the command of Captain Ryan, for the purpose of assisting the police to keep order at Cramlington, while the remainder of the men were evicted. Just as the soldiers arrived in the Central Station from Manchester they were met by the six men who had been committed that day by the magistrates to the Quarter Sessions, and who were then on their way to Morpeth Gaol. On Thursday, the 19th of October, the six men were arraigned at the Quarter Sessions at Alnwick, after their case had been specially referred to by Mr. Orde, the chairman, and a true bill had been returned against them. They were indicted for "that they did, at the Chapelry of Cramlington, on the 12th of October, unlawfully and riotously assemble together with divers other persons to the number of 100 and more, to disturb the public peace, making great riot and disturbance, to the terror and alarm of Her Majesty's subjects, and did also unlawfully assault and beat one Matthew Taylor." Mr. Shield, barrister, appeared to prosecute, and asked that the case might be adjourned. This, Mr. Blackwell, who appeared for the defence, agreed to, but asked that the men should be liberated on bail, and after some discussion between the Bar and the Bench, it was decided that the bail should be for each prisoner, £200, and two sureties of £100 each. They were liberated a few days after the Sessions, but surrendered to their recognizances at the following Spring Assizes in Newcastle, when D. Moore was sent to prison for nine months; T. Wandless and M. M. Glen, each eight months; and Alex. Barrass, T. Dodds, and T. Pringle, each for six months. John Alexander, Robert Heale, John Waters, and other men were also taken into custody, and charged with aiding and abetting at the riot, but their cases were dealt with by the magistrates.

On the Friday after the men had been brought up at Alnwick, the military, the police, and the "candy-men" arrived at Cramlington, and commenced clearing the houses of their inmates and contents, but there was no opposition showed, and matters passed off very quietly, though the conduct of the candymen did not by any means improve under the protection of the soldiers' bayonets. A number of men seeing no chance of beginning work at Cramlington again, engaged with Mr. Fletcher, the viewer of Trimdon colliery, who came over to look for men, and left the place. An attempt was made by the owners to get the pit to work with the off-hand men and mechanics, but they refused, and came out with the pitmen, on which the following resolution was passed at a meeting of delegates held at the Astley Arms, Seaton Delaval, on the 16th of November, "That we support the mechanics who have refused to work, and that they receive the same support as ourselves." On the following day, the 17th, the men were surprised by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the police and their rascally confederates, to clear the houses of the mechanics and off-hand men, for having thrown in their lot with the men on strike. At the outset an encampment was spoken of for the shelter of those turned out, but the publicans came nobly forward and offered the men and their families all their spare rooms, and in this manner most of them were housed in comparative comfort.

The men in their struggle met with much public sympathy, and not an inconsiderable amount of support. I have no wish here to rake up old sores, which have happily long since healed, and will, therefore, forbear any discussion of the question as to which party had justice on their side. At the time I thought the men's cause was that of right, and whether in my more mature years that is still my opinion is a matter of very little moment. A great number of the public evidently held that opinion, for a meeting on behalf of the men on strike, which was held in the Lecture Room, Newcastle, on the evening of Wednesday, the 22nd of November, was not only well attended, but was of a most unanimous and enthusiastic character. Amongst the speakers at this meeting were Messrs. T. Baulks and Lumsden, the former of whom laid before the people of Newcastle, in

simple, emphatic language, a complete statement of the position of the men on strike. But all expressions of sympathy were of but little avail, for they were doomed to be defeated. On the 5th of December about 300 men from Cornwall and Devonshire, with their wives and families, arrived in Cramlington, and soon the pits "hung on" with the assistance of these strangers. On the 27th of the same month a second batch of 128 men, 111 women, and 248 children, turned up from Cornwall and Devon, and with these the owners had their full complement of men to work their mines; though it was admitted on all sides that they were far inferior in ability and physique to the native miners whose place they had usurped. Thus the strike at Cramlington—the last great one in the county of Northumberland—which lasted over twenty weeks, was brought to a termination.

It was very confidently predicted by the croakers that this long strike would shut up the union in Northumberland, but the men determined to support it at all hazards, and rallied boldly around it. During the progress of the strike, a levy of from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per man, per fortnight, was cheerfully paid by the men, and the total sum paid over from the general board towards the maintenance of the men on strike was upwards of £4,290; besides which there were very considerable subscriptions from other sources. Indeed, the strike, so far from in any way crippling the union, aided to stimulate it; and since that period it has gone on increasing in strength and importance, and has doubtless been the means of preventing many strikes, for there have been no serious disturbances between capital and labour since. When Mr. Burt was appointed agent there were only 20 collieries, with about 4,000 members, attached to the association, whilst there was not more than £23 in hand. Now there are 16,000 members associated, with an accumlated capital of £15,500. The first interview of a deputation of the men with the members of the Coal Trade Association, took place in December, 1871, the representatives of the union consisting of Messrs. Grieves, Nixon, Cummings, Brown, and Burt. They asked for ten hours per day for the boys, and after some friendly and good-tempered discussion the Coal Trade granted eleven. The next deputation

met the Coal Trade in February, 1872, when they asked for an advance of 15 per cent., on which occasion 10 per cent. was granted; thus both sides conceding in a free and generous spirit. The members of the Coal Trade now began to see that the practice of meeting in committees in such a manner, to discuss the differences which could not fail to arise between the two interests, was much better than the old-fashioned mode of settling grievances by strikes; and in February, 1873, a joint committee was therefore formed for the purpose of settling all disputes which might arise from time to time between employers and employed. The representatives of the coal-owners consisted of Mr. G. B. Forster, Mr. J. R. Liddell, Mr. J. B. Simpson, Mr. H. Richardson, Mr. S. C. Crone, and Mr. W. R. Cole; whilst the men were represented by Mr. William Grieves, Mr. T. Brown, Mr. J. Cummings, Mr. J. Bryson, Mr. J. Nixon, and Mr. T. Burt, Mr. John Nixon, who formerly had acted as president of the association, was appointed treasurer after Mr. Thos. Baulks resigned that office; but the work becoming too heavy for Mr. Burt, Mr. Nixon was subsequently elected assistant secretary; Mr. Wm. Grieves, president; and Mr. R. Young treasurer. The miners have purchased large and commodious premises in Lovaine Crescent, Newcastle, where they transact all the business of the society. Messrs. Burt and Nixon reside on the premises, adjoining the offices, and in houses belonging the Northumberland Miners' Society.

Before closing this chapter I feel bound, in my desire to furnish an accurate account of all that has transpired, to refer to a very unpleasant affair which occurred in the early part of 1872, between a number of the miners of Northumberland and their indefatigable and valuable agent and secretary Mr. Thomas Burt. There are always in all associations of men certain individuals who are too much disposed to be discontented, however well they may be served, and unfortunately the Miners' Mutual Confident Association is no exception to this general rule. While all the world wondered at the great success which had attended Mr. Burt's labour, and all intelligent miners throughout the world appreciated the great zeal and energy with which he entered into their cause, a few malcontents set themselves to work to create a

faction against him at the various collieries in the district, and succeeded in creating a pretty considerable schism. When matters had become so bad as to be no longer tolerable Mr. Burt wrote a long and manly letter, appealing to the better sense of the men, and, as he anticipated, from his knowledge of the majority, with success. In the course of his letter he says :—" Men in positions of the kind must expect to have every word and deed freely criticised. Against this I have nothing to say. So far as I am concerned I am willing and even desirous of the fullest and freest criticism. But of late, I think all the bounds of fair criticism have been far overstepped, so far as my name is concerned. Anonymous scribblers have attempted to attack me in the columns of the public press ; insinuations, most cowardly and base, have been made against me ; language, the most coarse, the most vulgar and abusive, has been applied to me, and this in full meetings of the men. Is this fair to me personally ? Is it likely to conduce to the interests of the association ? If I commit any wrong is there not a proper tribunal before which I should be tried ? or is it understood that any yelping cur may be allowed to bark, and bite me in the back, simply to gratify his own low instincts ? Who are my masters ? This, to me, is a vital question. Long ago I made up my mind never to have for my master a tyrant ! I object quite as strongly to a number of tyrants. It is often said that working men are the greatest tyrants on the face of the earth. To this I do not subscribe—it is too general, too sweeping ; but I can say from bitter experience that there are, in the ranks of working men, some of the greatest tyrants it has ever been my ill-fortune to meet with ! We hear much about free speech, but of late attempts have been made to prevent me and others from expressing our opinions on some of the most important questions that have come before the association. I have seen clearly that there was in our ranks many men who do not like a man who freely speaks his mind ; they would prefer a smooth-tongued hypocrite, who will flatter them, and agree with them in their wildest and extremist notions, to one who will tell them honestly what he thinks is right. Men of this class think no one does any work but themselves ! As employers, they

are the worst of tyrants—believing that those whom they have anything to do with paying, cease to have any individual rights, and are mere tools to do their bidding, and in return for their service, they will see to it, that their tools are made as miserable as possible. Are such men my masters? I do not myself regard them as such, and I will never do so. It has been said at some places that I have had the situation long enough. Perhaps I have. If I have had it till I have lost the confidence of the men, I have indeed had it *too long*. But those who speak thus can easily put it to the test. Were I to leave to-morrow, however, I am under no obligation to those who attack me. I have done more work for them than I have ever been paid for. I have indeed been well paid in the kindness, the confidence, and gratitude of the great mass of the men. But these men cannot pay me, not possessing the sort of coin wherewith to do it."—After referring to the manner in which they met the proposal to advance his salary and to appoint an assistant, he goes on to say:—"It would be dissimulation to say that I feel perfectly satisfied. From a variety of things, some of which I have referred to, I have felt very much annoyed. My first impulse was to give up the situation at once. I say this in no threatening spirit; to do so would be foolish, for out of so many men, it ought to be a very easy matter to replace me. On reflection, however, I saw that to act in this way would be unfair to the Association, and to the great mass of the men, against whom, I repeat, I have no complaint. I thought it best, therefore, to lay the whole subject before you, to see if something can be done—be your Agent who he may—to make the situation itself one that a man can hold without degrading his manhood, and losing his self-respect. So far as I am concerned, I tell you honestly, that, while I wish to be of service to you to the utmost extent, I do not care, nor have I ever cared an iota for the situation. If you wish me to continue in it, I can do so only on certain conditions, most of which I always understood to be implied, if not distinctly expressed, in the relationship that exists between us. 1.—Something must be done to protect me and other leading men against the personal attacks, in meetings at any rate, of the evil-disposed and ignorant. I ask this in

the interest of the Association itself, for if something be not done, no man, who is worth having will take office for you at any price. 2.—I ask, and must have, the same personal rights as you yourselves possess. I came to you a free man, and I only can continue with you as such. (I choose my own company, I shall correspond with whom I like). I claim to have, or that I ought to have, some little time to call my own, and this leisure I dispose of in my own way. I shall at all time claim the higher liberty of speaking as I think upon every question. I will never consent to become the mere tool and mouth-piece for any man, or any body of men. What I am convinced is right, I shall ever advocate to the best of my ability; and what I am convinced is wrong, I shall ever oppose, whether popular or unpopular. To act otherwise would be to degrade myself, and ultimately to become useless to you. 3.—As regards the wage question now before you, I leave it for you to settle. I shall never differ with you on that point, so long as I get, as I always yet have got, sufficient to maintain my family. I am not, nor have I ever been, serving you merely for money; at the same time I may frankly say, however, that, until you pay something like what is paid to the men holding similar positions, I will always consider the situation underpaid." The result of this appeal to the manliness and intelligence of the pitmen of Northumberland was what Mr. Burt, in his sagacity, had been led to expect, a powerful reaction set in in his favour; and he became more popular and influential than ever he had been.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE CONDITION OF THE DURHAM MINERS. THE FORMATION OF THE PRESENT UNION IN DURHAM. THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The disorganized state into which the miners were thrown, principally by the long-protracted and severe struggle which took place at the collieries of Messrs. Straker and Love, at Brandon, Brancepeth, Sunnybrow, and Oakenshaw, and the numerous strikes which sprung up like mushrooms all over the county; and subordinately, by the dissention,

which, originating in the National Council, disseminated its baneful infection throughout the country, and divided men, whose interests lay in the closest of all unity, into innumerable parties and factions. Long after the strike referred to had been finally concluded, and the men who had struck had been scattered amongst the various mines in the district, the newspapers devoted to the interests of the miners used to teem with letters—charge and replication—in which the most contemptible and petty of all feelings were principally predominant. In the face of such a condition all question of unity was overthrown and gradually the men became so thoroughly disorganized as to make it a matter of extreme doubt whether any union prevailed amongst them or not. If a dispute arose at any colliery the men would come out on strike with the utmost indifference without taking the general board into consideration at all in the matter, beyond asking for support after they had done so ; and even individuals at the various collieries would take upon themselves, unauthorized, to represent the whole of his fellowmen. Matters continued in this way till early in the year 1865, when the Northumberland miners, who had remained more decidedly united from the first, became so dissatisfied with their Durham brethren that they resolved to shake them off. As already recorded, this was formally done at a meeting held at Plessey, in Northumberland. On the first secession of Northumberland from the general union, and its establishment as a distinct association, Mr. W. Crawford was appointed its secretary ; whilst Mr. Joseph Sheldon became the secretary of the wreck of unionism in Durham county. His appointment was neither lucrative nor lasting, for soon even the wreck was swept out of existence by the advancing tide of disorganization, and not a vestige remained behind. After continuing in this defenceless condition for two or three years, one or two of the leading spirits of the county set themsleves the almost Herculean task of reviving the union, and substituting harmony for the discord which then prevailed. Amongst those who attempted this work of regeneration was Mr. Edward Rymer, or, as he delighted to call himself, " Poor Neddy Rymer." Though it cannot be questioned that he infused a great deal of earnestness into his advocacy, it must be

also admitted that he was naturally incompetent to perform the task he had undertaken, for, after travelling about the country agitating here and there he gave the matter up for a bad job, and left Durham in a worse position than he found it. After Rymer left Durham. things became more settled at the various collieries, and the quarrels of the factions were heard of more seldom. Then a few men who were unionists at heart, and not merely by profession, banded themselves together at Thornley, Trimdon, and Monkwearmouth, and thus formed the nucleus of the present Durham Miners' Association, which was formally called into existence in the month of November, 1869. Mr. William Crake, of Monkwearmouth, was its first president, with him were associated Mr. John Richardson, as secretary and agent ; and Mr. Nicholas Wilkinson, as treasurer. In the years 1866, 1867, and 1868, material reductions were made in the wages of the miners in various parts of the county, but in 1869 a general reduction took place throughout the whole of Durham. This last movement on the part of the coal owners turned out ultimately to the advantage of the men, for finding that in their disunited condition they were being imposed upon, the union, as already stated, was called into existence, and in an incredibly short time the number of members on the register of the society was not less than 4,000. A reaction, however, set in, and before May, 1870, the number had been reduced to 2,000. On the 7th of May, in the last-named year, Mr. William Crawford was elected agent ; whilst Mr. Cairns, of Thornley, was appointed secretary ; and continued to hold that office till December. The result of the intelligent and energetic advocacy of Mr. Crawford was, that unionism once more became a reality in Durham county amongst the miners. In his labours he was assisted by Mr. W. Patterson, who was elected as agent on the 4th of June, 1870, and by the late Mr. Thomas Ramsay, who was appointed an assistant agent, in consequence of being a " sacrificed " man, and who continued to advocate the principles of unity with great ability, and with the utmost satisfaction, till his death, which occurred on the 8th May, 1873. In December, 1870, Mr. Crawford was appointed to fill the three offices of president, secretary and agent, there being only 17 lodges in

connection with the society, but subsequently, when the union became too large for the management of one man, Mr. John Foreman, of Roddymoor, was elected president, which office he still holds ; whilst Mr. Crawford continues to hold the joint offices of secretary and agent. Mr. Nicholas Wilkinson, who at first was only appointed treasurer, now does duty as agent and treasurer ; and Mr. W. Patterson also continues to act as one of the active and intelligent agents of the union.

In the early part of 1872, the men in this county began to grow very restive concerning the yearly bond, and considerable agitation took place over it. In March of that year, a deputation, appointed by the men, waited upon the members of the Coal Trade Association, and, after discussing the matter in a fair and temperate spirit, the yearly bond, —that bond of many a fierce contest—was finally abolished. In April, 1872, a joint committee, consisting of the members of the Coal Trade and the delegates of the men, was appointed to settle all differences that might arise between the miners and their employers. This was the first committee of this description established, and the arrangement was so good that it was speedily adopted by the Northumberland owners and their workmen. Unhappily, in the month of July, a strike occurred at Cold Rust colliery, in spite of the efforts of the association to prevent it, and after the men had been out for two months, the " candy-men " were once more introduced into the county of Durham. On Thursday, the 18th of September, 1872, eighteen families were turned out of house and home, and their furniture bundled out after them ; but fortunately this dispute was subsequently settled by the intervention of the Miners' Association.

From the month of May, 1870, up to the present time, the history of the Durham Miners' Association has been one of progress and prosperity and there are now 216 lodges in connection with it, with a membership of more than 40,000 men. Financially, too, its position is all that could be desired, for there is nearly £40,000 in the bank to the credit of the union, which has a fortnightly income of about £1,400; and out of which upwards of £8,000 was saved during the last financial quarter. The trustees of this fund are Messrs.

John Foreman, president ; Joseph Cowen, Jun., Blaydon ; James Fowler, the present mayor of Durham ; James Laverick, of Sunderland ; Thomas Hutchinson, and Martin Thompson. There is a sick, accident, and benefit department attached to the association, which is also connected in membership with the National Association of Miners. The members of this flourishing union have recently purchased an extensive block of property in the North Road, Durham, which is to be converted into offices for the transaction of the business of the society.

As most of the miners of Northumberland and Durham are now members, through their unions, of the National Association of Miners, the following particulars of the constitution and position of that society will prove interesting. As already stated, the first conference of the present National Association was held in Leeds, on the 9th of November, 1863, and since that period till recently its career has been one of varied character. Mr. Alexander McDonald, of Holytown, Scotland, is the president ; Mr. John Foreman, of Grahamsley, near Darlington, is the treasurer ; and Mr. Philip Casey, of Barnsley, Yorkshire, is the able and courteous secretary. The association is composed of the following districts :—

Northumberland District.—This district was formed in 1863, and numbers 16,000 members. The weekly contributions are 3d. per member. Accumulated funds, £15,500. The benefits given are 10s. per week in case of strike or lock-out, breakage, or repairs ; and a death legacy of £2.

Durham.—This district was formed in 1869, and numbers 35,000 members. The weekly contributions are in proportion to the benefits received, thus : for a contribution of 3d. per week the member receives the benefit of labour protection alone ; for a contribution of 6d. per week death benefits, &c., are added ; and for 9d. per week there is further added sick and accidental benefits, &c. Accumulated funds, £37,000.

West Yorkshire.—This district was formed in May, 1863, and numbers 10,000 members. The weekly contributions are 7½d., and extra levies when required. The accumulated funds are £5,000. The benefits given are death allowance for men, women, and children ; weekly allowance

for sickness and accidents to members ; also to widows and orphans of members who lose their lives while following their employment ; also to old members, &c.

South Yorkshire.—This district was formed April 10th, 1858, and numbers 17,000 members. Weekly contribution 1s. per member. Accumulated funds £34,000. The benefits given are weekly allowances in case of accident or sickness ; death allowance to members, members' wives, or children ; weekly allowance to widows and orphans, whether husband is killed or dies a natural death. Weekly allowance to old members, &c.

Cleveland.—The Cleveland district of Ironstone workers was formed January 13th, 1872, and numbers 5,200 members. Their weekly contribution is 3d. per member, and a small sum extra for Parliamentary purposes. The funds accumulated are £2,713 11s. 4½d. The benefits given are labour protection.

Warwickshire and Leicestershire.—The above united district was formed in Warwickshire on the 9th day of March, 1872, and numbers 2,000 members. The accumulated fund amounts to £1,600. The benefits given are weekly allowance for sickness or accident ; death allowance to members, members' wives, and children ; weekly allowance to widows and orphans of members killed ; weekly sum to support aged members ; trade protection, &c.

Derby and Leicestershire.—The Derby and Leicestershire district was formed May 20th, 1873, and numbers 1,400 members. The weekly contribution is 8d. per member, and the accumulated funds are £523 3s. 9d. The benefits given are strike and lock-out, and victimised pay, sick, and accident, and widow and orphans funeral donations, and old members.

Ashton.—The Ashton-under-Lyne district was formed in 1869, and numbers 3,200 members. The weekly contributions are 6d. per member. Accumulated funds, £2,080. The benefits given are labour, protection, and death allowance to members of £6.

Fife and Clackmanan.—This district was formed on the 16th day of February, 1873, and numbers 5,100 members. The weekly contributions are 3d. per member, and the accumulated fund is £5,629 13s. 11d. The benefits given

are for trade protection, but are on the point of adding other benefits.

Stirling and Linlithgowshire.—The above association was formed on the 8th day of June, 1872, and numbers 5,000 members. The weekly contributions are 3d. per member, and the accumulated fund is £2,396. The benefits given are trade protection, strike, lock-out, or victim pay.

Wishaw District.—Wishaw district, in Lanarkshire, Scotland, was formed on the 10th of February, 1873, and numbers 1,400 members. Being such a newly-formed association, their accumulated capital is only small, being but £414. The weekly contribution is 6d. per member, and no benefits are given—a resolution having been passed that the funds be not opened for the first twelve months, in order that an accumulated fund may be obtained, so as to enable them to be on a par with some of the older established districts.

West Bromwich District.—This district numbers 4,000 members, has only recently joined the National Association, and the report had not yet arrived.

The following is an abridged list of the districts, with the number of members in each. and the funds accumulated in August of the present year.

	Members.	Accumulated Funds. £ s. d.
Northumberland	16,000	15,500 0 0
Durham	35,000	37,000 0 0
West Yorkshire	10,000	5,000 0 0
South Yorkshire	17,000	34,000 0 0
Cleveland	5,200	2,713 11 4½
Warwickshire and Leicestershire ...	2,000	1,600 0 0
Derbyshire and Leicestershire ...	1,400	No return of Funds.
Ashton	3,200	2,900 0 0
Fife and Clackmanan	5,100	5,629 13 11
Stirling and Linlithgow	5,000	2,396 0 0
Wishaw	1,400	414 0 0
Mid and East Lothian	2,000	No return of Funds.
Larkhill	2,000	No return of Funds.
Maryhill	1,500	No return of Funds.
West Bromwich	4,000	No return of Funds.
Total number of members ...	110,800	
Total amount of Funds, as far as reported...		£107,153 5 3½

CHAPTER XLIV.

PASSING OF THE MINES' REGULATION BILL.

On the 10th August, 1872, the Coal Mines Regulation Act received the Royal Assent, and passed into law, its various provisions to take effect on the 18th of January, 1873. This was the bill over which there had been much agitation in recent years, and though it was not all that many of the sanguine advocates of the measure desired, it was certainly as much as could be expected. It is a really good Act, taken on the whole, and certainly goes much further to secure the safety and independence of the miner in following his calling than any previous legislative enactment.

At the outset it is provided that no boy under the age of ten, and no woman or girl of any age, shall be employed or allowed to work in any coal mine. Boys of the age of ten shall not be allowed to work in any mine, unless it be in a seam, by reason of the thinness of which such labour shall be, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, necessary, nor in such case for more than six days in any one week ; and if employed for more than three days in one week, then for not more than six hours in any day ; and in any other case, for not more than ten hours a day. No boy above the age of twelve ; and under the age of sixteen, to be employed below ground for more than 54 hours a week, or 10 hours in any one day ; and every boy above twelve and under thirteen years of age shall attend school on at least 20 hours in a fortnight, Sundays not being included, or any time before 8 o'clock in the morning and 6 o'clock in the evening. A number of stringent regulations are made to secure the proper registration of such boys at school, in order that the Act may not be evaded in this respect. Clause 14 enacts that no one under the age of eighteen years shall have charge of any machinery or apparatus on which the lives of men depend. The payment of wages in public-houses is done away with by this Act, and it is now illegal to pay wages either in a public-house, or in any place contiguous to one. Clause 17 regulates that after August 18th, 1873, all coal shall be paid for by weight, instead of by measure, as

in times past, except in such places where the owner and men voluntarily enter into a mutual contract to continue the measurement system. The men have also the power of appointing a check weighman on every pit heap, at their own cost, and the owner has no power to dismiss him for any fancied grievance ; but any complaint he may have against this representative of the men must be heard before the justices, who are to be composed of independent persons, a clause forbidding any man connected in any way with collieries to adjudicate upon any dispute between miners and coal-owners. By clause 20, the system of working mines with single shafts, which formerly obtained, is abolished, and no person is to be employed in any mine in which there is but one shaft, or which has not some easily accessible and well-known means of outlet belonging to the same mine, or in direct communication with some closely-adjoining mine. Every mine must be under the daily control of a manager, and a person shall not be considered qualified as the manager of a colliery unless he be registered as the holder of a certificate, after having passed an examination as a mining engineer ; the Secretary of State to have the appointment of the examining board, and the nature of the examination necessary to test the competency of candidates for viewerships. The owners are bound by the Act to make returns of the quantity of coal raised yearly out of their mines, and also a return of all lives lost, and all personal injury sustained in their mines by reason of explosions, inundations, or accidents of whatever nature. The proper inspection of mines by an inspector appointed by Government is also assured by the Act, and if the inspector at any time complains about any matter, the owners are bound to act upon the suggestion of this officer, or else to state their objections in writing to the Secretary of State, when that minister shall order the question at issue to be settled by arbitration, both parties being bound by the decision of the referees. When a coroner holds an inquest on any person killed in the mine, he is bound to adjourn the inquiry to allow of the attendance of the Inspector of Mines, and to give him sufficient notice of the time to which the adjournment has been made ; whilst all persons personally interested in mines, or employed in them, are rendered ineligible to sit as jurors on any such

inquisition. A clause especially provides for an adequate amount of ventilation in every pit, and in every mine where inflammable gas has been found to exist an examination shall take place once in every 24 hours if one shift only is worked, and once in every 12 hours if two shifts of men are engaged. These examinations are to be made by a properly qualified person or persons, and the results are to be recorded in a book specially kept for that purpose. The entrance to all places not in work shall be properly fenced off, and if at any time a dangerous amount of gas is found in the mine, every man and boy must be at once withdrawn from the pit till it has been dispersed. Proper precautions are also to be taken against inundations, and all workings in the vicinity of standing water are not to exceed 8 feet in width. Every plane, on which persons travel in and out bye upon, must be provided with a sufficient number of man-holes, or places of refuge, so that the men may be able to go into them when the set is running. In the special rules, provisions are made for propping the roof, whilst the roof and sides of all travelling roads are to be made secure by propping and otherwise. In descending and ascending, the men have only to ride in cages properly covered, in order that they may be protected from anything that might fall down the shaft. Penalties of fines and imprisonment are imposed on both men and masters for any breach of the clauses, and general or special rules.

This Act was the result of about ten years' earnest agitation by a large section of the miners, assisted by many outside friends, foremost amongst the latter in this district being Mr. Joseph Cowen, Jun., who not only assisted with his eloquence at large and popular meetings, but also advocated the measure through the columns of the widely-circulated *Daily Chronicle*, of which journal he is the enterprising proprietor. The Act has been called a "Delegates' Act," and to me no greater compliment could be paid to the framers of the measure, for in spite of its many defects, and of the croakings of the malcontents who wish to magnify these shortcomings, it is a really good measure. No one can read through this brief digest of it, which is all that can be given in a work of such limited dimensions, without coming to the conclusion that the representatives of the miners have

been actively engaged in its framing. No man, or any number of men, who had not actually worked in the mines could have framed such an Act, no matter how extensively they had inquired into the pitmen's grievances, or however desirous they might have been to remedy these grievances. There is an evident desire throughout to do justice to both sides, and to secure the confidence of both men and masters. This is very apparent in several of the clauses, but in none more so than in the 27th section, that relating to the examining boards, by which a Secretary of State may from time to time appoint, remove, and re-appoint fit persons to form such boards, as follows :—namely, three persons, being owners of mines ; three persons employed in or about a mine (not being owners, agents, or managers of a mine) ; and three persons practising as mining engineers, agents, or managers of mines, or coal viewers ; and one inspector appointed under this Act. Under the provisions of this equitable section, the board for the district, including the counties of Northumberland, North Durham, and Cumberland, is composed of the following gentlemen, owners of mines :—Mr. Thomas E. Forster, Mr. John Taylor, and Mr. Matthew Liddell. Persons employed in or about a mine :—Mr. Thomas Weatherley, Mr. Robert Elliott, and Mr. Andrew Sharp. Persons practising as mining engineers :—Mr. J. B. Simpson, Mr. A. S. Palmer, and Mr. Thomas T. Smith. The board have appointed Mr. G. B. Forster, Cowpen ; Mr. Cuthbert Berkley, Marley Hill ; and Mr. S. B. Coxon, Usworth ; to be examiners. The appointment of examiner is held during the pleasure of the board, and may at any time be revoked by a resolution duly entered in the minutes. Examinations are to be held twice a year, should a sufficient number of candidates be desirous of presenting themselves, at such times and places as the Secretary of State may appoint.

Soon after the passing of this Act, Mr. Thomas Burt addressed a long and important letter to the editor of the *Weekly Chronicle*, in which he adopted the measure, and explained many of its clauses and provisions. In his letter, he recommended that the Act should be carefully read by the miners, and more especially the general rules, a piece of advice so good that it will bear repetition in this place.

Before concluding this chapter, I will give a brief extract from Mr. Burt's letter, as it expresses so well my opinions. "I regard the bill," he says, "as an honest and genuine effort to deal with a difficult subject. There is an earnestness, a directness, boldness, and a grip in it, that contrasts favourably with some of the timid and half-hearted measures passed by the Government. The bill is quite a triumph. Never before in the history of British legislation did any section of the working classes so thoroughly leave their impression on an Act of Parliament. All the chief principles sought for by the miners they have gained. What is the secret of this success? From various quarters the miners have received valuable assistance. Several members of Parliament have taken great interest in their questions, and assisted them to the utmost of their power. The Press, London and Provincial, have spoken out strongly in their favour. They are also under a deep debt of gratitude to their Parliamentary leader, Mr. Macdonald, for the ability and devotedness with which he had advocated their cause. But above all they may thank themselves. They have succeeded because they have looked after their own business; they have sent their own representatives, and have not trusted others to look after their affairs. Some of the coal owners have called the measure a Delegates' Bill. Beyond doubt the miners' unions have had much to do with the passing of it. Nay, it is not too much to say—No unions, no Mines' Bill. No class of working men are better united than the miners, none are more public-spirited, and they have certainly brought the power of their unions to bear on this question. Two or three of the most powerful of these unions have fought the thing through from the commencement. For long they had to battle almost single-handed; but they had the courage of their convictions, and were determined to win. Of late, the miners of every district have rallied round them, and from these, tens of thousands of earnest men, have gone forth, but one voice, demanding in tones clear and strong, that the life of the miner should be protected. The splendid meetings held within a few weeks of each other at Stirling, Blyth, Durham, Barnsley, Leeds, and other places, were evidence of a power which no government could afford to despise or ignore.

JOSEPH COWEN, JUN.

Having gained so much by the power of union, then let the miners still remain firmly united, that they may win further conquests, and secure and make the best of those they have already won."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FRANCHISE MOVEMENT. THE GREAT MANHOOD SUFFRAGE DEMONSTRATION ON NEWCASTLE TOWN MOOR.

The miners of Northumberland beginning to see their power when united, began in the early part of the year 1872, to turn their attention to political matters. There was no reason, they argued, why they should not return to parliament one of their own members if they so desired, and as a preliminary step towards this they at once commenced a vigorous agitation in order to secure for themselves the franchise. The Reform Act of 1867 conferred household suffrage upon the borough constituencies, and at the same time the boundaries of many boroughs were extended so as to include various densely populated districts, whose inhabitants, although comprised within the limits of the county registration, did not possess the requisite qualification to entitle them to the county vote. This plan was adopted in preference to the course which must otherwise have been taken, of depriving many small boroughs entirely of their representation. Morpeth was one of these boroughs whose boundaries were enlarged, and the parliamentary district now comprehends not only the town itself, but Blyth and the colliery villages of Choppington, Newsham, Bedlington, Bebside, Barrington, Cowpen, Cambois, and others. From some cause which has never been explained, the names of only a very few of the miners brought within the limits of the borough of Morpeth were placed upon the register, the rights of the large majority being entirely ignored. This circumstance did not at once attract attention, but at length the extraordinary incongruity which had arisen presented itself to the miners who, from no cause which they could discover, had been left out in the cold. For the purpose of removing the anomaly

which had been created, a committee of miners was formed, of which Mr. Robert Elliot, jun., of Choppington, was chosen president. The Franchise Committee worked earnestly, and as far as the electoral powers at present vested in the people are concerned, successfully, for in the main they accomplished the object for which they were appointed. Their first aim was to procure the placing of the names of all occupiers on the Parliamentary register, and they properly applied to the overseers, to whom they presented their claim. The request was not acceded to by the overseers, and some magisterial proceedings ensued. In the first place, the overseers of Newsham were summoned at the Tynemouth Petty Sessions in August, 1872, for wilfully or negligently omitting to place the name of an occupier, a coal miner at North Newsham, on the rate book. For the defence, it was pointed out that the rate book had been made up, and had received the signatures of the justices before the claim was sent in, and that, then, the overseers had no power to add any more names. The court declined to interfere in the matter, and no redress was obtained. The same points were raised at Bedlington a fortnight later, when the overseers of the township were summoned under a similar circumstance, the same defence was set up, and the same result was attained. Prior to these summonses being taken out, however, several public meetings had been held at Morpeth and elsewhere throughout the borough, and great indignation had been manifested at the treatment which the miners had received at the hands of the authorities. The real position of the miners in reference to the franchise was fully set forth at these meetings by Mr. Glassy, Mr. Robert Elliott, Dr. James Trotter, and Dr. Robert Trotter, and others who were associated with them in their praiseworthy movement ; and they did not conceal their impression that as the miners formed a large majority of the population within the Parliamentary boundary they had a right to direct representation in the House of Commons. As the men had been defeated in their proceedings before the magistrates other efforts had therefore to be made to secure a place on the list of voters, and the revising barrister's court was resorted to. There all the perplexities and inconsistencies of the house-

hold suffrage legislation were exposed. Claims had been sent in on behalf of a large number of miners. These were now regularly proved; in fact no objections were raised. Several claims were considered, each being the representative of a class. In all instances it seemed the owners paid the rates of the colliery houses which the miners occupied, and which occupancy was deemed part of their wages. The evidence went to show that the men were not bound to live in the houses, and that the occupancy of them was not essential to the performance of their work. The revising barrister elicited, however, that in some instances agreements existed—(though it was not in all cases made clear that the men had ever seen them)—which specially provided that the houses should be occupied as a part of the wages, and that "the occupier should not be deemed the tenant thereof," and he thought the force of the words, "shall not be deemed the tenant thereof," was so clear and undoubted that, in those cases where such agreements were proved to exist, he decided against the claimants, and refused to grant a case. Apart from the agreement, the Revising Barrister decided that the occupation was in the nature of a tenancy, but as the claimants' names did not appear on the rate-book —they not having claimed before the rate-book was made up—they were not then entitled to the franchise qualification. At the South Shields revision court, however, the claims of the miners were admitted, and all who were qualified by term of residence were placed upon the register. At the revising courts this year the matter of neglecting to claim at the proper time was remedied, and a large number of pitmen were added to the electoral constituencies of Gateshead, Sunderland, Durham, and Morpeth. At the latter place a considerable change has thus been effected in the character of the constituency. At the first registration of the extended borough the total number of electors was 1698. Of this number Blyth and Newsham sent 166, and Cowpen 373, the remaining 1,159 being furnished by Bedlington and Morpeth in about equal proportions. In 1872, the number on the list had increased to 2,661, of which Morpeth and its dependent villages contributed 780, Bedlington 1,207, Cowpen 368, and Newsham and Blyth 306. The number of voters in the borough at this time

(1873) is 4,916, being an increase of 2,255 as compared with last year. Morpeth has increased its proportion by only 24, standing now at 804; Bedlington has nearly doubled its constituency, its figure being 2,244; while Cowpen, with 1,377, has almost quadrupled itself, Blyth and Newsham rising from 306 to 485.

Whilst the agitation to secure a vote for those miners living within the limits of the borough constituencies was being carried on, the men of such districts as were outside of the limits of boroughs, began to express their discontent at such an unjust and indefensible system as the present law perpetuated, namely, the maintaining of a distinction between the county and the borough qualifications. Those of the working classes who happened owing to their ill-fortune, to reside a little beyond the prescribed boundaries to be deprived of rights which were enjoyed by many who lived perhaps only a few yards distant from them, began to make known their opinion on the subject in very emphatic terms. The miners of the county of Durham particularly raised their voices in protest against the continuance of the anomaly,and they adopted measures for giving an expression to their convictions and bringing them before the notice of those with whom lay the power of reconciling the inconsistency. Several of the collieries which were foremost in the movement requested the executive of the Northumberland Miners' Union to convene a meeting of the delegates representing the various trades in the northern districts, with the view to organising a demonstration in favour of manhood suffrage. The miners of Durham were also invited to co-operate, and after one or two meetings of the Manhood Suffrage Committee had been held, the whole body of the Durham pitmen expressed their concurrence with the opinions promulgated in the more northerly county, and readily consented to lend their countenance to the movement. The various trade societies of the district resolved to co-operate, and a committee to make arrangements was appointed, with Mr. J. Cowen, jun.. at its head as chairman. The first meeting of the Manhood Suffrage Committee was held in February of the present year. Delegates from nearly every workshop and factory on Tyneside, and from the body of miners in Northumberland and North Durham were chosen to act

upon the committee, and the selection of a day on which the proceedings should take place, so as to ensure the greatest attendance at the least sacrifice of time, and at the smallest possible inconvenience to the inhabitants of Newcastle, required some consideration and discernment ; and, at length it was resolved that the Saturday intervening between Good Friday and Easter would best suit all the circumstances which had to be taken into account. That day was accordingly selected ; and then the form which the demonstration should assume was easily determined. The method best calculated to create the desired impression, and most forcibly influence public opinion, was that of assembling *en masse* on the Town Moor, there to declare in favour of manhood suffrage in counties and boroughs, to petition Parliament in favour of such a measure, and to memorialise the Prime Minister with a view of receiving his approval and sympathy. To render the programme still more effective and imposing, it was arranged that a procession, to be constituted of miners, trades and friendly societies, and other associations, should be formed in the neighbourhood of the Central Station, and proceed thence, accompanied by their bands, banners, and trade emblems, to the rendezvous on the Town Moor. The details of the procession next occupied the attention of the committee, and their ultimate resolution was that next to the leaders of the movement and the various speakers of the day, the place of honour should be allotted to the Northumberland miners, the position which the men of the forty or fifty collieries should respectfully occupy being determined by ballot. The next section was appropriated to the pitmen of Durham, sixty or seventy mines being represented ; while the last division of the great procession was to be composed of the members of the various organized societies and the men connected with the different factories on Tyneside. An elaborate system of marshalling was devised, in order that the procession might be effectively organised ; and on the Moor six platforms were provided. To each of these platforms a chairman and a complement of speakers were assigned, to whom were entrusted four resolutions which were to be moved simultaneously, and submitted to the audience for approval.

Saturday, the 12th of April, the day appointed for this

stupendous and imposing demonstration, at length dawned, and soon the streets of Newcastle were thronged with multitudes of pitmen, their wives, and children, as well as by other people ; whilst countless banners of great beauty flashed across the eye at nearly every step, and stirring music from innumerable bands greeted the ear at almost every turn. Men proudly bearing rosettes upon their breasts, emblems of office, were hurrying to and fro the whole morning long, in arranging the procession, which from its magnitude seemed utterly incapable of arrangement. As the hour fixed for starting drew near, however, the line began to assume an orderly appearance, bands and banners fell into their appointed places, and the heads of this noble army of freemen were drawn up ready to move at the signal opposite the *Chronicle Office*. Precisely at one o'clock by the time gun, the band heading the section composed of the chairman, speakers, and committee, struck up, and the forward movement commenced. From the very start the formal procession was expanded by the addition of four impromptu columns—two on each side of the legitimate four abreast, whilst the pathways were packed all the way with large crowds of spectators. The route taken was along Collingwood Street, up Grey Street, along Blackett Street, up Percy Street, and by way of back Eldon Street, to the Moor. Every window along the entire route commanding a peep at the moving column was packed with spectators, many with fashionable dressed ladies. Presumably those looking from the windows of the first three streets were representatives of the class which was enfranchised forty years ago, and there certainly did appear to be some trace of indifference as to what should become of the ladder which is proverbially attributed to people who have safely climbed to the attainment of their ends. Nevertheless, as they looked, and scanned, and reckoned up the sober and thoughtful multitude defiling before them with the precision the discipline and the manly gait of freeman, the idea seemed to be fading away before the brightness of the self-evident truth, that no reason could be assigned or even imagined why these men, who constitute the strength of the commonwealth, should be any longer treated as aliens or slaves. When the procession turned out of Blackett Street it

seemed to be getting into homelier quarters, and it met with more pronounced manifestations of genuine sympathy. The windows of every house gave egress to two if not three tiers of human heads, which bravely wagged themselves in spite of obvious difficulties to signify the sympathy of the hearts that were beating strongly a little in the rear and lower down. Public houses were utilised for sight-seeing as extensively as possible ; though on such a day, every house was a public-house for the nonce, or at any rate, its accommodation for viewing all that went on was exhaustively utilised. Even the Church lent its sacred sanction to the new reform. High up in the steeple of St. Thomas' the privileged were surveying as from a sub-celestial elevation the surging emblem of progress in the lower world. Near to this point the human interest of the spectacle culminated. Dense as had been the stationary columns along the whole line, the spectators nowhere presented such an overwhelming appearance to the processionists as when they deployed on the rising ground in front of St. Mary's Terrace, right up beyond the turn to Jesmond Road, The first platform was reached by twenty-five minutes to two o'clock. The tail of the monster procession did not come to a halt on the Moor until five minutes to four. Ir was, therefore, just about three hours that the march to the Moor actually occupied. The eye became weary with glowing colours, the ear of sweet and stirring music, and the heart of such unremitting appeals to its choicest sympathies and most powerful emotions. When an hour and a half of gathering together had elapsed there was such a *coup d' œil* as seldom if ever was seen by human eyes before. It was almost a matter of congratulation that the sun withdrew the chary smiles with which he had greeted the arrival of the mighty multitudes from the country ; and when the black canopy of thundercloud settled heavily over the Leazes, the brilliant blazonry of banners shone out on the solemn background with all the glory of a rainbow—that bow of promise which from age to age has cheered the children of toil.

As the various bodies of men comprising the procession made their way over the Moor, they soon came in view of the platforms which had been prepared for the use of the speakers. These were six in number, and were distinguished

by the names of the several chairmen conspicuously posted above them, thus enabling all who had any preference to gratify their inclination in regard to the set of addresses to which they desired to listen. They were posted at no great distance from the north-west corner of the Bull Park, but in a line stretching from the direction of Back Eldon Street towards the Grand Stand, and were some fifty yards apart. About half-an-hour was allowed before the commencement of the business, though, during the whole progress of the meeting the procession continued to move along ; and when the speaking had been brought to a close, after having occupied an hour and a half, the foremost of the trades societies were only arriving upon the ground. The series of resolutions which were submitted from the several platforms, and spoken to for the most part by colliers and other working men, in perhaps rugged, but withal decided and emphatic language, were the following :—

First Resolution.—" That, in the opinion of this meeting, the distinction at present existing between the qualification for Parliamentary electors in boroughs and counties is irritating, perplexing, and unjust ; and that the only true and satisfactory settlement on which the imperial franchise can be based is manhood."

Second Resolution,—" That no extension of the suffrage will secure a full, free, and fair representation of the people unless it is accompanied with a re-distribution of seats and an equitable apportionment of members to population."

Third Resolution.—" That petitions to both Houses of Parliament, embodying these resolutions be signed in the name of this meeting by the six chairmen, and sent for presentation to the House of Commons by W. B. Beaumont Esq., M.P., and to the House of Lords by the Right Hon. the Earl of Durham. That a memorial also be sent to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., enclosing him a copy of the resolutions, and requesting his earnest consideration to the reforms indicated."

Fourth Resolution.—" That this meeting urgently recommend the formation of associations in all the villages and towns throughout the two counties of Northumberland and Durham, to keep the question of Parliamentary reform prominently before the country, and to make arrangements

for supporting Liberal candidates at the forthcoming general election."

When all the formal business had been gone through, and when the tail end of the procession had reached the Moor, the men marched back again to Newcastle, and subsequently were hurried by special trains to their homes; and thus ended one of the grandest demonstrations that the working men of this country ever made in favour of freedom and equality, and one which few who had the good fortune to share in it will ever forget. There could not be less than eighty thousand men taking part in this demonstration, and of this number nearly seventy thousand were colliers from the counties of Northumberland and Durham; but though so many men were in Newcastle, there were only three cases—and these were merely charges of drunkenness—before the Newcastle magistrates the following week, in which men connected wirh the movement were implicated. Surely this of itself was a powerful argument in favour of the moral qualification of the men for the suffrage they had assembled in such force to demand.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONCLUSION.

Having traced step by step the history of the miners of the two counties of Northumberland and Durham, where the coal trade, which is now one of the staple industries of this kingdom, took its rise, and where it is still more largely carried on than in any other district in England or Wales; having traced the history of the labourers in this industry from the dark ages when they were regarded and treated more as serfs than as free men, up to the present day, when an honest man, be he miner or not, may look the whole world proudly in the face, and boldly demand from the world a recognition as one of a great human family, it may not be unprofitable to review some of the causes which have led to this improved state of things. To the progress which is the natural lot of mankind much may be ascribed, but if the pitmen had not exerted themselves to supplement the ordinances of nature, it cannot be doubted but that a very great many of the beneficial changes which we have

recorded would never have occurred, for after all there is a very considerable amount of truth and force in the old proverb, which asserts that "God helps those who help themselves." First and foremost then amongst those which have been supplementary to the natural causes, may be regarded the growing faith in the principles of unionism. Man is not sent to this earth to live by himself, and for himself alone, and when this maxim is more generally adopted, this world will be a better place to live in. History conclusively proves that whenever men have combined together, either for good or evil, their power has been almost irresistible; but that where, on the other hand, they have individually striven to advance alone their own selfish interests, regardless of their neighbour's interests, they have ever been defeated. When the miners of Northumberland and Durham were disunited, they were forced into abhorent contracts extending from year to year, bound hand and foot to toil from morning to night—and often both day and night—without any adequate recompense for their labour; but when they became united they could make their own terms, and feel that they were free men. Unionism then became a necessity with them, for without it they were compelled to work in dangerous mines, in which explosions were every now and then occurring, and hurrying scores and hundreds of their fellows away into eternity year by year. Mr. Lloyd Jones, when in Newcastle in April last, so forcible stated the necessity of unionism that his words may be quoted here. In speaking of the value of trades' unions Mr. Jones said:—"What did every man in the country require in reference to his labours and his life? He wanted first the independence of the workshop, and he wanted to be able to pursue his work in such a manner and under such conditions that it should not be a degradation to him in his eyes. He wished to be independent in following his ordinary daily occupation; and they must bear in mind that the chief portion of a man's life was spent in the workshop. After he left the workshop he required to be comfortable in his own home. He wanted those comforts, which ought to belong to every man that had to labour to secure them, and he wanted in addition to secure the comfort and happiness of those who were depending on the fruits of his labour, and on his love for their welfare.

He wanted, in relation to the nation, to be able to contribute to its welfare, to be able to contribute to its progress, and to the increase of its wealth ; and to assist in its defence in case danger should come to it. He would say that trades unionism, in connection with co-operation, which was the highest thing yet undertaken by working men, carried with it an effect in relation to the labourers of the country affected, as well as to the multitude of the people, such as nothing else with which they were acquainted carried with it. In its relation to the workshop what did they see ? They had had a severe contest recently between the mining population of Wales and the coal owners. They had had about 70,000 men in Wales, together with a large number of women and children, thrown out of work, in consequence of a difference between the employers and the employed, and when the men endeavoured to enter into negotiations to bring about an end of this unhappy difference, the employers would not receive those men who were put forward as their agents. If they would consider for a moment the miner's life, and the many dangers attending his occupation, and the additional danger which he wished to escape from of having to remonstrate against his employer, who had full powers over him, they would easily understand how absolutely necessary it was that bodies of these men should have agents to transact their business with safety to themselves. The working miner left his home in the morning to pursue his occupation, he had to descend some hundreds of yards into the earth, his life and the lives of his fellow-men depending alone on one rope that might be unsafe through having been over-worn, and yet if he or any one of them should speak of that to the employers, the chances were that they would be thrown out of employment. Indeed, one strike in Wales—or rather, he ought to say, a threatened strike, for it did not actually come to a strike—was in consequence of a remonstrance by the men of that description, and the associated miners went against the men in favour of the owners and the rotten rope ; but happily when the matter came to be investigated it was found that the men were quite right. When the miner got down the pit and began to hew the coal there was gas developed, which might at any moment explode, to the destruction of any man within its influence. But if any man ventured to

speak to his employers about the ventilation, and hinted that it was not so satisfactory as it ought to be, the result of that remonstrance might chance to be his discharge from his employment. They had daily terrible explosions occurring in these coal pits, destroying life and limb wholesale ; and during the last ten years 12,000 men had lost their lives in the coal mines of England. Twelve thousand men had been struck down in the prime of their life, to say nothing of those who had been disabled and crippled. Under these circumstances did they not think they ought to have some one to carry their remonstrances to the employers, and insist on having those things remedied which were standing dangers to them ? That was what the agents of trade unions had to do. It might not be that the gas was dangerous, it might not be the unsafety of the rope, it might not be to confer with the employers concerning some rise or reduction of the wages of the men, but in all occupations there were necessities for reforms or rectifications, to speak first of which would be dangerous to the man who should speak first, and so it often happened that the men had refrained from speaking till the fatal day had arrived, and the widow had to mourn over her husband lost, and children had to suffer in consequence of the loss of their parents. They said that working men, in combining together in their trades, were simply doing those things which were absolutely necessary for them to do in the situations in which they were placed."

What a change had unionism effected in this district ? The men had compelled the employers to admit their strength ; and in place of considering them as so many animals, they now meet them on equal and friendly terms, and discuss points of difference with the agents of the men as they would with their merchants about the price of coals. Could such have occurred without the aid of a union ? Most certainly not. And if the masters have come to acknowledge in their workmen their equals in everything but social position, the men too have undergone a process of education in their attitude towards their employers. No longer now do they regard their employers in the light of hard taskmasters, to rob whom on every possible occasion is a virtuous and praiseworthy act, as many were wont to consider, but now they look up to the coalowners with

feelings of respect, and recognise in them men who have rights and interests to be protected by their workmen. A few years ago there was not a single coal owner in the Northumbrian coal field, the mention of whose name would not have provoked a storm of curses from any multitude of men ; but now the names of most of them are greeted at public meetings with cheers and applause. One of the leading members of the Coal Trade Association—Mr. Hugh Taylor—is on terms of positive friendship with the leaders of the men, whilst one of the best known mining engineers of this country—Mr. George Baker Forster, is the acting engineer to the Co-operative Coal Mining Company. We now see the owners building places for the men to conduct the business pertaining to the mangement of their union in, and it is no rare thing to read of the employers presiding at meetings of their employees. There are but few collieries in the two counties where the owners and viewers do not co-operate with the men in the formation of reading rooms and libraries, and take almost as lively an interest in the welfare of their instititions as the men themselves. The one party has come to know that it is more profitable to have intelligent and educated men to work their mines, and the other to appreciate the fact that it is better to co-operate with their employers, and to serve and protect their interest with their own, instead of living in contention with them. A few years ago, and all this had been impossible, and now it is a reality which with every day is becoming more and more apparent. This is what union has done, and what union can do it is impossible to speculate upon. The men should above all unite to have the whole of the miners in the two counties educated in order to fit them for the good time which is coming. It is impossible to deny that many of the pitmen are still grossly ignorant, but it is more their misfortune than their fault. The power which is responsible for so many of the rotten branches in out constitutional tree is more to blame for this intellectual darkness of the miners than they are themselves. Oh !—

> " Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
> Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
> Given to redeem the human mind from error,
> There were no need of arsenals and forts."

The toiling sons of England are becoming imbued with the spirit which is breathed in these lines, and they are about to make a proper application of the wealth and power which has been so long wasted and misapplied.

Unsatisfactory though the moral and intellectual condition of the miner to-day is, yet compared with his condition at the period treated in the opening chapters of this book there is a miraculous change. Side by side with the union the earnest men who have been stigmatized "Ranters," the Primitive Methodists of the two counties—have been working out the social, intellectual, and moral amelioration of the miners, and in this great reform they have been very materially assisted by the temperance advocates who have from time to time laboured amongst the miners. No doubt there were many zealots in both bodies, many indeed that were positively bigots, but if taken generally it will be found that they were respectable, earnest, intelligent truth-seeking men, who, having got a glimmering of the truth, and having become enlightened with intellectual light themselves, were anxious to carry the glad tidings of truth to their still benighted brethren, and to endeavour to lighten their great darkness. Probably no body of men have ever been subjected to so many jibes and jeers from superficial people as those referred to; but without doubt none ever achieved such glorious results as they have done. To many it may be a matter of supreme indifference what is the exact creed professed by Primitive Methodists; but whether they have a creed or none at all it is impossible for any observing man not to see and admire the bold and ardent manner in which they carry on their labours amongst the miners. Most of the pitmen now-a-days think, either more or less, for themselves; half a century ago it was otherwise. But the Primitive Methodists induced many of them to reflect, and the result of that reflection was speedily manifest in the outward garb of the man. He took to going to Chapel, and, finding it necessary to appear decently there, he got new clothes and became what is termed "respectable." In the abstract perhaps, this was no great improvement; but there was also a great change wrought in the man himself, for in place of spending his time and his money idly in the public-

house, he was brought by the influence of the "Ranters" and the "Teetotalers" to acquire some little self-pride, which gave place to a desire for learning, which had to be gratified. Men who had grown up and had children old enough to go to school, have been sitting side by side on a form learning the very rudiments of reading and writing; and those bodies who could work out such a great and glorious reform as this deserve respect and admiration rather than contempt, however zealous or even bigoted some of their individual members may have been.

Co-operation too, which is but an application of the principle of unionism, has had its influence on the social improvement of the miners of these two counties; and in the place of gross extravagance and improvidence a prudential and provident spirit has been widely developed amongst them by the many stores which have sprung up in the colliery villages. The history of this movement has been elsewhere treated, and it has only been referred to here in connection with the causes which have worked such a great and beneficial change in the lives of the miners.

And now finally the hope may be expressed that the days of strikes have passed for ever, and that the children now growing up in out pit rows many know nothing of these desperate measures except when they read of them as the contentions of dark and barbarous ages. With forbearance on the side of both employer and employed, this hopeful condition of things may be easily achieved. Pitmen are turning their attention to better things than the mere acquisition of higher wages, when they lend their ears to the advocacy of improved dwellings, shorter hours, and higher education for their children. These are reforms that may be accomplished without strife, and ought to be, for the result will be glorious and manifold; but in order to do all this the miners of these two counties must remain firmly united. Without union nothing can be done, and with it mighty things. And above all let us hope that the men of Northumberland and Durham will never be wanting in that manly independence which has been their characteristic through all time, and in the midst of great difficulties; and that they may always be inspired with the

spirit breathed in that poem, which, though old is ever new and ever true :—

Who shall judge a man from manners ?
Who shall know him by his dress ?
Paupers may be fit for Princes,
Princes fit for something less.
Crumpled shirts and dirty jackets
May beclothe the golden ore,
Of the deepest thoughts and feelings—
Satin vests could do no more.
There are springs of crystal nectar
Ever welling out of stone ;
There are purple buds and golden,
Hidden, crushed, and over-grown ;
God, who counts by souls, not dresses,
Loves and prospers you and me,
While He values thrones, the highest,
But as pebbles in the sea.

Man upraised above his fellows,
Oft forgets his fellows then ;
Masters—rulers—lords remember
That your meanest hinds are Men—
Men by labour, men by feeling,
Men by thought, and men by fame,
Claiming equal rights to sunshine,
In a man's ennobling name.
There are foam-embroidered oceans,
There are little reed-clad rills,
There are feeble inch-high saplings,
There are cedars on the hills ;
God who counts by souls, not stations,
Loves and prospers you and me ;
For to him all vain distinctions
Are as pebbles in the sea.

Toiling hands alone are builders
Of a nation's wealth or frame ;
Titled laziness is pensioned,
Fed and fattened on the same ;
By the sweat of others foreheads,
Living only to rejoice,
While the poor man's outraged freedom
Vainly lifteth up his voice.
Truth and justice are eternal,
Born with lovliness and light,
Secret wrongs shall never prosper
While there is a sunny right.
God, whose world-heard voice is singing
Boundless love to you and me ;
Sinks oppression, with its titles,
As the pebbles of the sea.

APPENDIX.

In order that the readers may be enabled to judge for themselves as to the nature of the grievances of the miners forty years ago, and the manner in which they were met by their employers, a copy of an appeal to the public which was published in the early part of 1831, is here given verbatim.

"AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC FROM THE PITMEN."

"Delegates' Meeting, Newcastle, May 6th, 1831.

"We, the pitmen of the collieries on the rivers Tyne and Wear, do certify to our friends and the public, that on Thursday, the 5th inst., we convened a meeting on the Black Fell, for the purpose of laying before the same the terms offered us by the select number of viewers, when the Marquis of Londonderry was present, who, with some magistrates, backed by the military, and threatening to bring more from Newcastle and Sunderland, more than once threatened to read the Riot Act if we did not disperse. But, by reason of our importunity that they would accede to our reasonable demands, his lordship volunteered (as we hoped) to be a mediator if we would disperse, and we accordingly acceded to his request and he positively promised to guarantee one point, and to meet the delegates at Newcastle on the 5th. We met him accordingly, and he agreed to that one point; but to-day we met, expecting to come to a happy conclusion, and three of the select number of viewers, put the following questions to the deputation from the delegate meeting:—

"Question 1.—Will you give up every other point and go immediately to work upon the terms offered by the collieries on the 19th of March, subject to the various

concessions already made, provided the 30s. offered by the Marquis for 10 days, and subject to the fines, be given up ?

" Answer.—We cannot agree to this in consequence of the fines not being taken into consideration.

Question 2.—Will each colliery go to work as they severally agree with their employers without reference to other collieries ?

" Answer.—As soon as the eight points respecting the bond are settled each colliery will then endeavour to agree with their employers and go to work.

" The following are the eight points referred to in the bond :—

" I. Respecting being turned out of our houses as soon as our time of hiring is up ; we want this clause done away out of the bond.—The owners offer to give us 14 days after the expiration of the bond. Agreed to.

" II. Putters' Renks (the distance the putters go for each corf). We ask for the first renk to be 60 yards at 1s. 4d.—The owners propose 80 yards at 1s. 2d., and 1d. per score advance as soon as the distance exceeds 80 yards, with conditional price for heavy putting. Agreed to.

" III. Working Hours (the time we are to be underground). We want the time to commence as soon as the lads begin to go down the pit, viz., to work 12 hours from that time.—The owners offer that the pit draw coals 12 hours ; and again they want the lads to be half-an-hour down the pit before the 12 hours commence. Agreed to.

" IV. Binding (the time the bonds are to be read). We wish the binding to be at the usual time. Agreed to.

" V. Adjusting of the Corves (to have the corves made less when they get too large, or made larger when they get too little). We are willing to send 20 pecks to bank, or rather 87·249ths imperial gallons, but to have the privilege of seeing that the corves are not to be larger than is necessary to hold 87·249ths imperial gallons, provided that we do not stop the work, and to be done within three days. Agreed to.

" VI. Fines (for a small mixture of stones, rusty, or small coals, sixpence, one shilling, and sometimes more for one corf). We want only to be fined the price of the corf for laid-out.—The owners will not agree to this.

"VII. Working days with the rate of wages in the minimum. We ask 11 days per fortnight for 25 fortnights per year, subject to the provisions in the 7th article of the bond, the wages to be 3s. per day or 33s. per fortnight, out of which the fines are to be deducted.—The owners offer 10 days at 3s. per day, if we agree to the propositions offered on the 19th of March.

"VIII. Respecting laying the pit idle. We want this amendment made to the 7th article of the bond :—'That if by any accident happening to the engine sufficient to lay the pit idle, or the pit be rendered unfit for working, and the said parties,' &c.—The owners want, that if by 'any accident happening to the engine or from any other cause, a pit shall be rendered unfit for working, and the said parties,' &c. We wish another obnoxious part to be entirely taken out of the same article which says, 'and in case they are permitted by the said owners to find employment elsewhere, and that such employment may be had.'

"These are the points upon which we have been contending, and the progress which had been made towards their adjustment, before the last meeting; from which it will be seen, that upon five of the points in dispute, the pitmen had agreed to the proposals of the owners. But because the pitmen have not given up the remaining points, the owners now want them to come to the terms offered on the 19th of March, before any of the above points were adjusted. From this plain statement, the public will be able to judge between us, and see which party has made the most concessions."

We have spoken of the union of 1831, in the text of this book, and that it may be seen that it was such a combination as to justify that term, the balance sheet is here given. It will be observed that no less than £32,580 18s. 4½d. was subscribed by the 63 collieries—all then in existence—associated, with the assistance of a few friends, whilst £19,276 12s. 4½d. was paid from this fund to men out of employment, and £13,008 12s. 6½d. paid for sick and death benefits.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE OF THE COLLIERIES BELONGING TO THE PITMEN'S UNION, COMMENCING MAY 27, 1831, TO AND WITH JUNE 23, 1832.

	Income.			Paid to Sick and Death.			Paid to Men out of Employment.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Beamish ...	204	13	0	136	8	8	68	4	4
Black Boy, Auckland	145	0	0	60	5	0	81	15	0
Derwent Crook	188	14	10¼	79	7	11½	100	2	5½
Fatfield ...	703	0	10	288	14	2	414	6	8½
Felling	229	17	0	141	11	8½	83	5	8
Friar's Goose ...	161	7	0	91	19	3½	63	11	10
Gare's Field ...	242	16	6	64	4	5	173	3	2
Gateshead Park	119	2	0	62	0	0	46	4	6
Harraton ...	115	3	2	77	12	7	138	19	7
Haswell ...	75	11	0	10	0	0	65	11	0
Heworth ...	206	16	10	114	0	0	89	16	10
Hetton (South)	2,886	15	10	2,060	14	10	794	15	2
Hetton (North)	527	19	2	296	5	11	237	17	3
Hebburn ...	388	11	6	146	5	6	146	19	6
Jarrow	425	7	3	380	0	0	41	1	7½
Kibblesworth ...	45	5	9½	15	7	0	25	14	6
King Pit ...	52	7	5	36	15	0	12	12	5
Lambton ...	2,262	8	4	788	6	1	1,464	0	4½
Monkwearmouth	66	2	10	9	1	10	57	1	1
Mount Moor ...	279	12	6	112	12	6	157	12	1
Newbottle ...	1,304	6	3½	618	13	1	707	19	1
Ouston	252	13	2	111	13	8	134	12	5
Pittington ...	1,117	7	2½	399	5	1	696	15	9½
Rainton ...	2,533	7	7	522	8	11	1,964	11	11
Shiney Row ...	998	14	10	164	2	10	768	5	1½
Sheriff Hill ...	175	13	3½	103	8	8	63	7	5½
Slare Gate ...	194	3	6	57	0	0	105	4	5½
Shield Row ...	69	10	0	57	18	11	5	0	0
Shields (South)	478	1	11	248	13	0	234	8	11
Springwell ...	287	3	0	186	3	0	100	11	0
Tanfield Lee ...	110	15	1	55	15	9½	50	8	10
Team	159	11	0	68	3	6	70	17	3
Waldridge Fell	152	17	1	15	12	0	134	16	7
Carried forward	£17,170	6	3¼	£7,580	10	11	£9,309	13	11

	Income.			Paid to Sick and Death			Paid to Men out of Employment.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Carried forward	17,170	6	3¼	7,580	10	11	9,309	13	11
Washington ...	296	5	3	160	19	3½	128	15	7½
Backworth ...	606	11	3½	202	9	3½	402	14	5
Benwell ...	412	12	0	101	3	10	295	5	2
Blakelaw ...	183	14	5½	54	0	1	130	8	7½
Cramlington ...	274	5	5	166	19	8	102	8	6½
Cowpen ...	1,077	8	7½	394	2	2	633	3	9
Earsdon ...	794	0	10	319	5	7	461	13	1
Elswick ...	184	0	0	108	12	1	62	11	0
Fawdon... ...	394	4	9	205	13	3	174	4	3
Glebe	165	19	0	75	12	5½	85	11	11
Gosforth ...	275	8	6	198	14	4	76	14	2
Hartley ...	396	0	9	284	12	4	105	9	9
Heaton	777	7	8½	162	2	1	591	7	11½
Holywell ...	592	2	2	138	11	11	428	16	8
Jesmond ...	199	0	9	54	0	8	134	0	5½
Kenton ...	288	7	7	207	8	7	40	19	0
Lawrence (St.)...	261	4	6	52	12	3	206	14	3
Percy Main ...	1,111	17	6	367	13	1	737	1	3
Seghill	781	6	1	131	14	0	642	9	6
Shilbottle ...	66	5	3	33	9	5	37	2	3
Shields (North)	377	4	3	167	18	7½	190	16	10
Walbottle ...	683	3	11	292	14	0	489	9	11
Walker	1,001	2	9½	268	17	8	726	14	6
Wallsend ...	955	6	8	208	6	11	679	3	0
West Moor ...	978	4	6	241	7	5	736	19	1
Whitley... ...	408	13	0	129	19	6	275	18	0
Wide Open ...	343	14	0	113	17	8	165	15	5
Willington ...	1,108	14	10½	265	4	6½	829	16	5
Wylam	312	11	9	120	0	8	292	11	1
Wylam (South)	3	4	0	0	0	0	3	4	0
Donations from friends ...	98	19	8	0	0	0	98	19	8
Total	32,580	18	4¼	13,008	12	6½	19,276	12	4½

Below is given a verbatim copy of the bond which the men in Northumberland and Durham were called upon year by year to subscribe to, whether they liked it or not, thirty years ago. Stringent as are many of the articles in the bond, they are comparatively lenient to those which were included in the "memorandum of agreement" in force before the strike of 1831. Practical miners will be able to estimate the wages which it was possible to earn under such an agreement, and the number of hours which it would be necessary to work in order to secure sufficient to enable a man to keep himself and his family from starvation. Small coal is to be separated from the round, and coarse from the best coal, at the option of the viewer—never at the option of the workmen—and if out of 450 quarts of coal, one of them was foul coal, splint or stone, the man not only lost his earnings as far as that tub or corf was concerned, but was fined 1½d. with a penalty of 1½d. for every quart up to six, when the offence was so terrible that the offender must either be fined 5s. or be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and be liable to punishment before the magistrates, who were for the most part coal owners. If a man, who was to consider himself the servant of the owners at all times whether they could find him work or not, chose to remain at home for a day, or did not do a full day's work when at work, he was liable to a fine of 2s. 6d. ; and if by any accident to the engines he was laid off work for a length of time he was not to have any compensation till three days had elapsed, and only then if he went to do other work that was offered him ; nor must he seek work elsewhere unless with the permission of the owners. The bond, however, speaks for itself, and fully justifies the men in asserting that they were enslaved, the first sentence of the twelfth article which declares that "none of the said hereby hired parties shall keep either galloway, ass, or dog," being as nice a piece of petty tyranny as could be met with, and only equalled by the terms under which farm labourers were employed till very recently in the South of England.

"*Memorandum of Agreement* made the 18th day of March, in the year of Our Lord, 1843, between Thomas Davidson, Esq., of Durham, John Easton, Esq., of Pelaw, John Henderson, Esq., of Durham, William Anderson, Esq.,

of South Shields, George Bates, Esq., of Newcastle, and Andrew Stoddart, Esq., of South Shields, owners of the Bedlington Colliery, on the one part, and the several other persons whose names or marks are hereunto subscribed of the other part. The said owners do hereby retain and hire the said several other parties hereto from the 5th day of April next ensuing, until the 5th day of April, which will be in the year 1844, to hew, work, fill, drive, and put coals, and do such other work as may be necessary for carrying on the said colliery as they shall be required or directed to do by the said owners, their executors, adminintrators or assigns, or their viewers, or agents, at the respective rates and prices, and on the terms, conditions, and stipulations, and subject to and under the penalties and forfeitures hereunto specified and declared, that is to say :—

" First.—The said owners agree to pay the said parties hereby hired once a fortnight upon the usual and accustomed day, the wage by them to be earned at the following rates, namely, to each hewer, for every score of coals wrought out of the whole mine, each score to consist of 20 corves or tubs, and each corve or tub to be equivalent to bring to bank 25 imperial pecks or 7½ cwt ; each peck to contain 4½ imperial gallons ; the sum of 8s. 6d., and the sum of 6d. per score for separating the small from the round, and casting it back. Wet working 4d. per score, ramble 4d., per score when it is met with above the stone and coarse coal. The above prices to include casting back the stone and cannel coal at the top of the seam. And in case it is required the coarse coal is to be separated from the best coal and sent to bank so separated, or cast back, at the option of the viewer, for the above price of 8s. 6d. per score. When the coarse coal is cast back the quantity to be calculated according to its thickness by the viewer or overman. In case the coarse coal be mixed with the best, or the best with the coarse, they will be laid out. And for driving or working each winning headway with two or more men the sum of 2s. per yard, and when single the sum of 1s. 10d. per yard, and for holing walls with two or more men the sum of 1s. 10d. per yard, and when single the sum of 1s. 8d. per yard ; and for driving narrow boards with two or more men the sum of

1s. 8d. per yard, and when single the sum of 1s. 6d. per yard ; and for driving cross-cuts with two or more men the sum of 2s. 2d. per yard, and when single the sum of 2s. per yard.

" Second.—Putting. And to each of the said parties hereby hired 1s. 4d. per score of like measure and weight as herein specified, for putting a 25-peck corf or tub the first 80 yards, and a 1d. per score in addition thereto for every 20 yards they shall put or run, and in proportion for a larger or smaller corf or tub. And when any of the hewers shall be required to do shift work they shall be paid at the rate of 5s. 10d. per shift of 8 hours working. Each person for whom the owners shall provide a dwelling house as part of his wages, shall be provided with fire-coal, paying the owners 3d. per week for leading the same ; and each wagon driver shall be paid 1s. 2d. per day ; and when keeping doors 1s. per day.

" Third.—The said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, shall provide and keep at such pit a measure tub or weighing machine, and whenever any corves or tubs shall be sent to bank suspected to be deficient in measure or weight, the coal therein shall be measured or weighed by the heap keeper, or other person appointed for that purpose by the said owners, and if found deficient no payment shall be made for hewing and filling the same ; but the hewer thereof shall not be subject to any forfeiture of penalty on that account. The standard measure tub to contain 112½ imperial gallons, and the standard weight to be 7½ cwt. And in case any foul coal, splint, or stone shall be found in any corf or tub to the amount of one quart the hewer thereof shall forfeit to the said owners 1½d ; for 2 quarts 3d. ; for 3 quarts 4½d. ; for 4 quarts 6d. ; and for each quart over and above 4 quarts he shall forfeit 6d. per quart ; but if the whole quantity shall exceed 6 quarts he shall either forfeit and pay 5s. or be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall be subject to such penalties as may be inflicted by law, over and above paying the above named penalties, at the option of the said owners.

" Fourth.—All penalties and forfeitures hereby agreed and required to be paid to the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, by the said other parties hereto,

shall be demandable and paid on the first pay day after they shall have been respectively incurred, and shall thereupon be deducted from the first or next following earnings or wages of the persons incurring the same until fully paid ; and if they shall not be demanded on such first day and deducted as aforesaid, or if they shall be abandoned or remitted by the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, or their principal agents, they shall not afterwards be revived or enforced or required to be paid. And also that all claims and demands of the said parties hereby hired upon the said owners, or in respect of any matter or anything relating to these presents, or their services under the same shall arise, and that no such claim or demand shall be brought against the said owners for or in respect of any cause, matter, or thing, which shall have occurred prior to such last preceding pay day.

" Fifth.—The said parties hereby hired shall during all times that the pit shall be laid off work continue the servants of the said owners, subject to their orders and directions, and liable to be employed by them at such work as they shall see fit.

" Sixth.—That the said hewers hereby hired shall when required (except when prevented by sickness or other sufficient unavoidable cause) do and perform a full day's work on each and every working day ; or such quantity of work as shall be fairly deemed equal to a day's work (not exceeding eight hours), and shall not leave their work until such day's work or quantity of work is fully performed or finished to the extend of each man's ability, and in default thereof each of the said parties hereby hired so making default shall for every such default forfeit or pay to the said owners, their executors, administrators, and assigns, the sum of 2s. 6d.

" Seventh.—That if by reason of any accident happening to any of the engines or machinery placed in or upon any of the pits of the said colliery, or by reason of any accident in the shaft, or by reason of the mine being in an improper or unsafe state, and the said parties hereby hired shall be laid idle for more than three successive days, 2s. 6d. per day shall be thereafter paid to such of the said parties as are hewers ; 1s. 6d. per day to such of them as are putters ;

and 6d. per day to such of them as are drivers ; provided that they respectively work at any other labour offered them by the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, and in case such work is not provided for them, then the hewers shall receive only 1s. 6d. per day, the putters 9d. per day, and the drivers 4d. per day, and in the event of any of the said parties being, with the permission of the owners, fully employed in any other colliery, no payment whatever shall be made to them during such employment.

" Eighth.—The headways shall be driven not exceeding two yards, and the boards shall be turned not exceeding two yards (when required) wide, and that the hewers shall stow away or cast aside, such quantities of small or refuse coals as the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns or agents shall require ; and shall do the business of drivers, and shall set on corves or tubs, and shall do shift work when requisite ; and that the drivers shall duly drive and lead away such a number of corves or tubs of coal as shall be a reasonable and fair day's work, such day's work to consist of not less than 12 hours, and to commence from the drawing of the first coals, and that each hewer shall be provided with a rake, shovel, maul, and wedges by the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, for which he shall be accountable, and shall provide himself at his own charge with picks, coal drills and hammer ; and that the hewers and drivers shall when required by the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, or agents, put with trams or act as barrow-men at such rates and prices as are herebefore mentioned, the said owners paying the hewers 4d. per score as furtherance, and all the parties hereby hired shall and will in performing their respective duties obey, abide by, and fulfil all the lawful directions and orders of the said owners, their executors, administrators, and assigns, or their agents at the said colliery.

" Ninth.—If the said parties to these presents, or either party be desirous of adjusting the measure tub, or weighing machine used in the said colliery, and of such their desire shall give to the other party a reasonable notice, such adjustment to take place in the presence of any two of the parties hereby hired who shall be nominated by the rest for that purpose, and that wherever such tub or machine shall

be found not to agree with the standard they shall be with all convenient speed made to agree therewith ; but not so as to interrupt or stop the working of the said colliery. That the corves or tubs to be used at the said colliery shall be of a competent size to bring such measure or weight to bank.

" Tenth.—It shall be competent for the viewer of the said colliery to prevent the use of gunpowder, either wholly or in part, at his discretion.

" Eleventh.—Each person to whom a dwelling-house shall be provided as part payment of his wages, shall keep in good repair the glass in the windows thereof, or pay the said owners for the repairs of the same, it being distinctly understood that the dwelling-house provided for any of the persons hereby hired or engaged are to form part of the wages of such persons ; and on the expiration of such hiring in case any of them shall quit or be legally discharged from the employment hereby agreed upon, he or they shall at the end of 14 days thereafter quit such dwelling-house or dwelling-houses, and in case of neglect or refusal, such owners shall be at liberty, and he or they, and their agents and servants are hereby authorized and empowered to enter into and upon such dwelling-houses, and remove and turn out of possession such workman or workmen, and all his and their families, furniture, and effects, without having recourse to any legal proceedings.

" Twelfth.—None of the said hired parties shall keep, either galloway, ass, or dog ; and in the event of the said hereby hired parties whose names or marks are hereunto subscribed, wilfully or negligently disobeying the orders of the said owners or their agents, or committing a breach of any of the articles of this agreement, then and in every such case the said owners are hereby authorized to stop and retain out of the wages next becoming due to each and every such person so offending, a sum not exceeding 2s. 6d. for every such offence or to punish them for such misbehaviour by due course of law.

" Lastly.—It is hereby mutually agreed that in case any dispute or difference shall arise between such of the said hereby contracting parties as are above the age of 21 years, respectively, relative to any matter or things not hereby

provided for, such dispute or difference shall be submitted to two viewers of collieries, one to be appointed by the said owners, their executors, administrators, or assigns, and the other by the said hereby hired parties of the other part, and in case of their disagreement, to a third person to be chosen by such two viewers, and the judgment or decision of such viewers or umpire, as the case may happen, shall be conclusive between the parties on the matters referred to them, provided always, and it is hereby declared, that as to such of the parties hereto as are under the age of 21 years respectively, these presents shall only operate as a simple contract of hiring and service, and especially that such parties shall be subject to any of the penalties or forfeitures hereby imposed; but that nothing herein contained shall extend or be construed to extend or alter, prejudice, lessen, or otherwise affect the legal remedies and powers which by law belong to masters and servants in their respective relations to each other, or to magistrates having jurisdiction in case of dispute or difference between them.

"As witness the hands of the parties, this day and year above mentioned."

The following brief biographical sketches of gentlemen, who have long manifested a lively interest in the welfare of the working miner, and who are referred to in the foregoing pages, are given here for the purpose of not interfering with the continuity of the work itself, and it is believed they will prove of interest to the majority of readers.

MR. HUGH TAYLOR.

(See Portrait, page 194.)

The name of no coal owner is more widely, or more favourably known in these two counties than that of Mr. Hugh Taylor, the genial owner of Chipchase Castle. Mr. Taylor is the son of the late John Taylor, of Shilbottle, in Northumberland, and was born in 1817. He was named after his uncle, the late Mr. Hugh Taylor, of Earsdon, who was well known as the commissioner of the Duke of Northumberland. Part of his eductaion was received at the Royal

Jubilee School, New Road, Newcastle, and nothing seems to give him greater pleasure than to attend at the annual examination of the Jubilee boys, and give them a word of encouragement and advice. Being of a generous and adventurous disposition, he chose the sea as his profession, his first voyage being from North Shields, in the Royal Standard. He very soon discovered that the life of a mariner was rather too hard, and not very profitable, and accordingly while yet young, he left going to sea, and became a partner in a house of coal factors, in London ; and, subsequently, in several very extensive collieries in the North of England, including Haswell, Ryhope, Backworth, Holywell, East and West Cramlington, as well as in many mines in South Wales. In 1842, Mr. Taylor married Mary, the daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Taylor, of Cramlington Hall. In 1852, he successfully contested the borough of Tynemouth against Mr. R. W. Grey, the then sitting member who was a talented young Whig ; but treating had been very extensively carried on by his supporters, and in the followong year he was unseated on a petition, for bribery. Mr. W. S. Lindsay, the well-known shipowner, was then returned in his stead ; but at the next election in 1859, he returned to the charge, and succeeded in ousting Mr. Lindsay, who was elected for Sunderland soon afterwards. Though returned as a Tory, Mr. Taylor had not been in the House of Commons very long before he surprised his Conservative friends in North Shields by the liberality of his views, and by his repeated appearance in the Liberal lobby, against the Tories on critical and party questions. On the death of his brother, Mr. Thomas John Taylor, in 1861, Mr. Hugh Taylor deemed it prudent to devote more time to his own business, and he accordingly retired from Parliament. Since then he has confined his attention almost exclusively to his own business, which has very largely extended, and now includes the proprietorship of a very considerable tonnage of steam shipping. Mr. Taylor is chairman of the Coal Trade Association ; president of the Newcastle and Gateshead Chamber of Commerce ; and a Justice of the Peace for the Counties of Northumberland and Middlesex. As an employer, Mr. Taylor is at once the best known, and the best beloved of all the coal owners of the north. While looking

after his own interests in every legitimate manner, he yet recognises to the fullest extent the interests of the miners, and in place of regarding them as mere tools, as many yet are disposed to regard them, he looks upon them as fellow-men rendering him an obligation by their labour equally as he renders them an obligation by finding them employment. In all disputes arising between him and his men, he has ever shown a generous and conciliatory spirit, and no man who has had any dealings with him—be his social position what it may—ever had cause to complain of any discourtesy on the part of Mr. Hugh Taylor.

MR. JAMES MATHER.

(See Portrait, page 160.)

The subject of the accompanying engraving was born in Newcastle, and studied Medicine and Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and first came before the public as the inventor of the first life-boat ever used in the merchant service. The boat was placed on board of the Mary, belonging to Mr. Mather's father, and was the means of saving the whole crew when the ship was wrecked in the Baltic, and secured a vote of thanks to the inventor through the Danish Ambassador from the Danish Admiralty, who adopted it for the navy of the country. He early took a prominent part in political matters, and for his endeavours to secure the return of Captain Gowan, for South Shields, in 1832, he was presented with a handsome silver cup. When the cholera broke out in 1832, Mr. Mather was appointed by the Government a member of the Board of Health, and obtained much notoriety by his observation of some facts of electricity in spasmodic cholera; and in 1834 he appeared as the author of a work which was spoken of by the *Times* as "an excellent text book for the politician," entitled "The Constitutions of Great Britain, France, and the United States of America." He visited the United States in 1838, and on his return to this country he gave two important and instructive lectures on the United States system of government. We have already recorded, how

in 1839 he descended the pit of St. Hilda to the rescue of the men below, and his successful advocacy of a committee to inquire into the causes of accidents in mines. The report of that committee, of which he was the secretary and the moving power, obtained an European reputation, and was in 1853 ordered to be reprinted by the parliament, it having got out of print. In 1842 he was mainly instrumental in securing the return to parliament for South Shields of Mr. Wawn, a Radical; was chairman of the first corn law repeal meeting at South Shields when Mr. John Bright addressed the inhabitants, and afterwards frequently acted as chairman to the Anti-Corn Law Association. For the active part he took in the miners' interest, which is more or less fully detailed in the text of this work, he was presented with a handsome silver cup by the miners of the north, in the Lecture Hall, Newcastle, the inscription on the cup setting forth that it was presented "as a token of gratitude for his talented and praiseworthy exertions in promoting measures to diminish the danger arising from bad ventilation and other causes in the mines of the kingdom." On several occasions he has saved life at sea, and on one occasion received the "grateful and sincere thanks" of the Royal Humane Society upon illuminated vellum, "for his courage and humanity." He was endowed with a mind of restless and untiring energy, and ardent and generous temperament, and few men amongst us have rendered so many public services, or done more to advance the interests of the neighbourhood.

MR. JOSEPH COWEN.

(See Portrait, page 269.)

Mr. Joseph Cowen, whose name is a household word in Northumberland and Durham, is the eldest son of Sir Joseph Cowen, one of the Liberal representatives of the Borough of Newcastle in the House of Commons; and was born at Blaydon Burn, where his father had lived for many years, and carried on a very successful business as a fire-brick maker. While yet a very young man, he associated himself with all the more prominent leaders of public opinion

in this district, and by his genius, intelligence, and intrepidity, soon became recognised as the leader of the leaders. Ever in favour of reform of all abuses and obsolete usages, he spared neither time nor labour in advocating these changes ; and visited most of the colliery villages in the neighbourhood in agitating in favour of reforms. Here he stirred the miners into action by his homely and effective eloquence, and succeeded in leading them into serious reflection on political matters. He was mainly instrumental in calling into existence the Northern Reform League, an association of earnest reformers, which did considerable work some fifteen years ago, and which instituted a prosecution for bribery at Berwick in the year 1859. Mr. R. B. Reed was the secretary of this union, and played a very active part in this prosecution ; and many miners who now lead the van of political thought in their own villages, first derived their inspiration from Messrs. Cowen and Reed. In the year 1859, Mr. Cowen purchased the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* and the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* from Mr. Mark William Lambert, for the purpose of using the columns of those journals in the advocacy of reforms, and with what success he has done this is known to all. As soon as the *Chronicle* passed into the hands of Mr. Cowen, its columns were opened for the publication of the grievances of the working classes, and especially those of miners. By degrees their meetings came to be reported, and a lively public interest in their welfare was thus created. In the year 1859, Mr. Cowen was elected a member of the Newcastle Town Council for Westgate Ward, in the place of Mr. Dunn. In 1865, he was mainly instrumental in securing the return of his father as the representative of Newcastle in the House of Commons, beating on that occasion Mr. Somerset A. Beaumont, who, five years previously had been elected, on the retirement of Mr. George Ridley from the representation. When his father came before the constituents again at the general election in 1868, he was opposed by Mr. Charles Frederic Hammond, a political charlatan, who sought the suffrages of the electors as a Conservative ; but the united influence of Mr. Joseph Cowen and his popular journal proved too much for Mr. Hammond, and he was left in a minority of nearly 5,000 of the man he had come forward to

oust. Previous to this last contest, when the Tory government were muddling the "Representation of the People Bill," a large demonstration in favour of reform was promoted principally by Mr. Cowen, and many thousands of the miners of the two counties took part in it. During the agitation, antecedent and subsequent to the passing of the Education Act, Mr. Cowen united himself with several other gentlemen in Newcastle, as an Education League, in connection with the National League, and was appointed as its chairman. This league initiated several very important meetings in Newcastle and district, and no doubt assisted much towards getting the Education Act passed. In 1871, he was elected a member of the Newcastle School Board, then newly formed, and in company with Mr. R. S. Watson, and Dr. Rutherford, fought with great vigour against the sectarian tendencies of the majority. His connection with the co-operative movement in the north is known to all, and his ardent sympathies with the welfare of the miners is also a matter of notoriety. He has held the office of president of the Northern Union Mechanics' Institutes, and is at present a vice-president of that useful institution. He has ever advocated the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes, Reading Rooms, and Free Schools in all small towns and villages, and Free Libraries in all large towns. From Mr. Joseph Cowen came first the suggestion which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Newcastle Physical Science, for though Dean Lake was as active as any man could be in its promotion, it was probably that but for Mr. Cowen, no such institution would at present be in existence. In 1872, he had the extreme satisfaction of seeing a well-deserved compliment paid to his father, who was knighted in that year by the Queen, not for tuft-hunting, as too many get such honours bestowed upon them, but as a recognition of a long life spent in the service of his country, and in the assertion of manly independence. Mr. Cowen is ever ready with his eloquence or pen to advocate any cause that has right and justice upon its side, and there is scarce a public meeting held in Newcastle, or neighbourhood, in favour of any reform, in which he does not take part, either as president or speaker.

GEORGE BAKER FORSTER.

(See Portrait, page 190.)

Mr. George Baker Forster is the son of Mr. Th Emmerson Forster, a colliery engineer, well known in North of England. Mr. Forster was educated at Cambr University, where he graduated M.A., and was destinec the profession of a Clergyman in the Church of Eng but he was never ordained; and preferring his fath calling he threw away all chances of promotion that m have been open to him in the church, and got an engagem as a mining engineer. He first came prominently be the public in connection with the Hartley accident, the part he took in endeavouring to clear the shaft, only proved him to be a man of great skill and ability one possessing a generous sympathy with his fellow m Since then he has often taken part in public matters c nected with collieries, and has won a confidence not only the majority of the coal owners in the district, but also the entire body of men. He is also a partner in seve collieries, including Cambois and Cowpen, and he w mainly instrumental in building a place of meeting for t men at the first named colliery a year or two ago. M Forster was elected as one of the examiners into the qua fications of candidates for viewerships, under the new Co Mines Regulation Act, and has besides been appointed t the shareholders of the Co-operative Coal Mining Compan of Newcastle as their engineer.

1923.

Thos. Summerbell, Sunderland.

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